HIDDEN LINEAGE

THE NINJA OF THE TODA CLAN

Sean Askew

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I feel extremely grateful to have the opportunity to write this foreword for Sean's first book. I have had the honor of being friends and training partners with Sean for over 30 years. We were roommates for many years when living in Ikebukuro, Tokyo and then later Naka-Meguro Tokyo. We would train literally nearly every dayof the week.

Sean however always took things a step or two further and while he was studying at JochiUniversity (上智大学) he would come home and be engrossed in Japanese books about the martial arts. Sean would often travel around Japan looking for connections and their historical relevance to the Bujinkan, then go and report to Hatsumi Soke about his findings.

There are many types of people who study Budo. However, there are few people who have dedicated their life to the understanding of our art as much as Sean. Over and above Sean's historical knowledge of the Bujinkan, martial arts and Japanese history, Sean has always walked the walk rather than just talk the talk when it comes to training and his actions in daily life. From being an honest, loyal friend with unmatched integrity, to constantly putting himself in the most intense learning environments to better his understanding of the art and himself, I could not ask for a better friend. Although not related by blood, we are brothers.

This book, I am sure, will open many doors for many people in the Bujinkan and I can only hope there will be more excellent books like this onefrom Sean going forward.

Brothers in Arms.
Anthony Netzler
May 2019

INTRODUCTION

With the publication of this book, Sean Askew is bringing forward for the first time interesting new ideas about the origins of the practice of ninjutsu in Japan. In particularly, he has traced the traditions and ideas that would later be labelled *Togakure Ryu ninjutsu* from their origins in the Togakushi area northwest of Nagano, down through the centuries until the school ultimately found its way to modern-day Tokyo.

Sean's work examines the connections between the traditional spiritual practices of *shugendo* and *ninpo*, highlights the role that Inukai wolf-dog breeders played in the movement of ninja to the Kyoto region, and delves into the unique style of falconry that was simultaneously practiced by exponents of *ninjutsu*.

Ultimately, his work culminates in the evidence he believes points to the true identity of Toda Shinryuken Masamitsu, the grandfather and teacher of the notable 20th century martial artist Takamatsu Toshitsugu.

This is a story full of illuminating details and important coincidences. It is also, it must be said, risky: Sean is not a professionally-trained historian, and so this can't be said to be a truly academic work. Or can it? When we first discussed this project, one thing that impressed me about Sean and this project was his willingness to be challenged.

When I put to him that some people may take issue with his findings and his methods, his reply to me was: "I don't mind if I am wrong, because if someone out there can show conclusively where I have made mistakes, then we will all learn from that and as a result get closer to the truth. The truth matters more than me being right."

This is surely an attitude which should be at the heart of all academic work - a willingness to push our existing boundaries of knowledge forward. It is an attitude for which I commend him.

Is the Hidden Lineage hypothesis correct? It's up to the reader to come to their own conclusions. But there is no doubt that in this book, Sean Askew has written a well-researched and exciting history of ninjutsu from the earliest times up to the start of the 21st century.

Alex Meehan
Bujinkan Dojo Dai Shihan

Dublin, Ireland. Summer 2019

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY AND ORIGINS OF NINJUTSU

The words *ninja* and *ninjutsu* have become commonplace in today's modern world. Almost everyone knows the popular image of the black clad *ninja* sneaking through the dark, nothing showing but his or her eyes.

But what is the reality of the *ninja* and their art, *ninjutsu*?

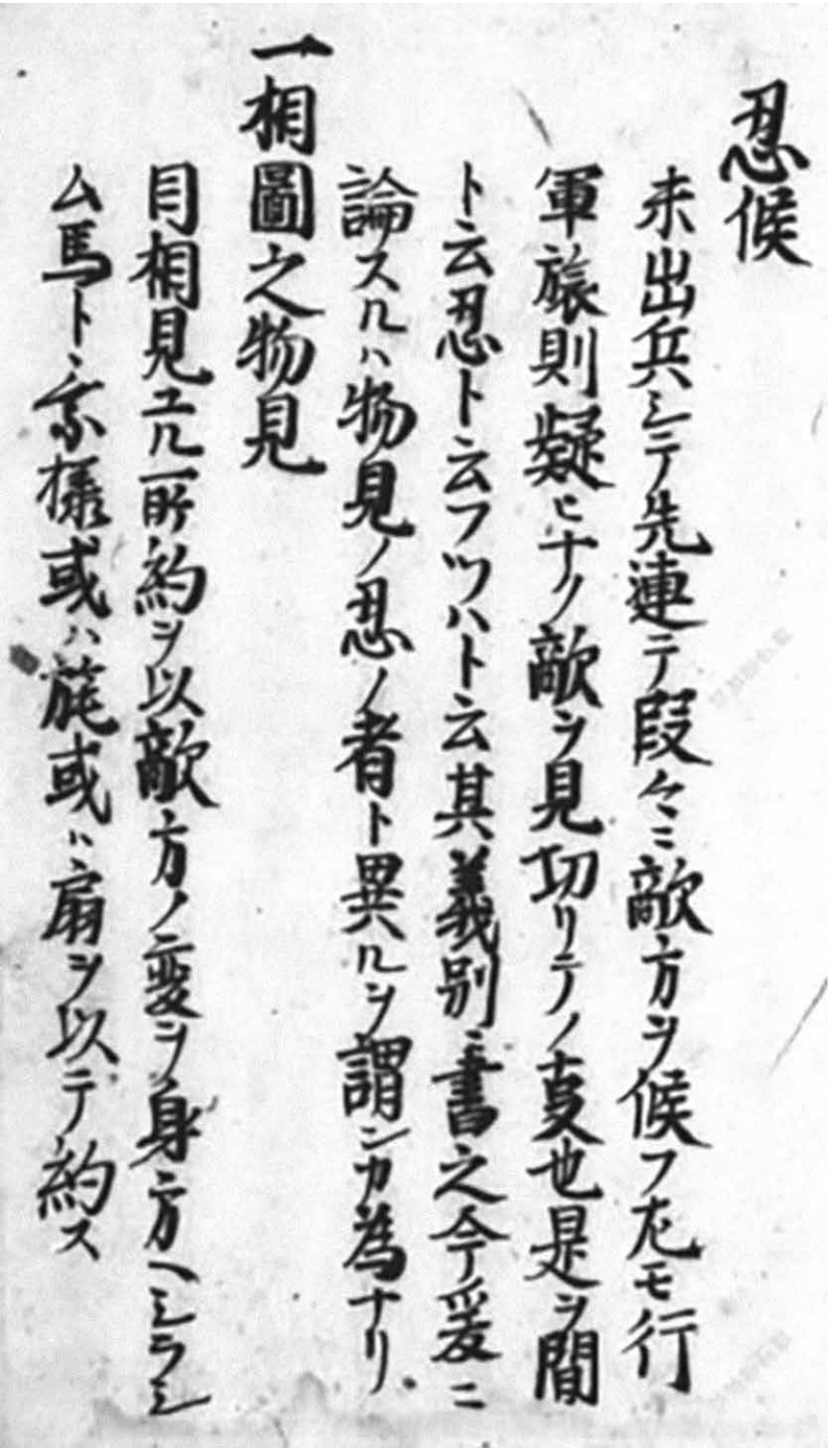
Nearly everything we see portrayed in the mass media regarding the *ninja* is somehow related to cartoon-like stories and superhuman feats of heroism. But what is the truth about the skills and abilities of the historical *ninja*?

Ninjutsu (忍術), or as it is sometimes called *Ninpō* (忍法), is the combined art of stealth, unconventional warfare, guerrilla warfare and espionage. These were the type of missions ingaged in by the typical historical *ninja*, or *shinobi* as they were originally known. Their method or 'way' of going about successfully accomplishing their mission was the art of *Ninjutsu*. In some senses the *ninja* of old were very much like modern spies. They would use methods of stealth and disguise to carefully gather intelligence about their enemy, then use that intelligence to strategize an efficient plan of attack that would have the most physical and psychological impact on the enemy.

Espionage and spying in Japan can be traced in the historical record as far back as Prince Shōtoku (572–622 CE), although some historians will argue that it goes back even further. According to the *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀), Japan's oldest historical text written in 720 CE, Prince Shotoku retained a warrior named Ōtomo no Hosohito (大伴細人) that communicated with other clan members via secret code and was skilled in clandestine warfare.[1] It is here in the *Nihon Shoki* that we first find descriptions of people in Japan called *ukami* (斥候), also pronounced *sekkō*, doing things that today we would commonly call *ninja*-like. Another term for them was *kanchō-mono* (間

1 忍ぶの里の記録、石川 正知、翠楊社、1982

諜者) but in the *Bansenshukai*, a manuscript we will discuss later, it says that Prince Shōtoku called these men *shi-no-bi*, written as 志能備. Over the centuries, for various reasons, the written characters for *shinobi* evolved into 忍び, as it appears in the Taiheiki (太平記), a historical heroic poem written in the late 14th century about the Nanboku-chō, the period of war between the Northern Court of Ashikaga Takauji in Kyoto, and the Southern Court of Emperor Go-Daigo in Yoshino.


忍候
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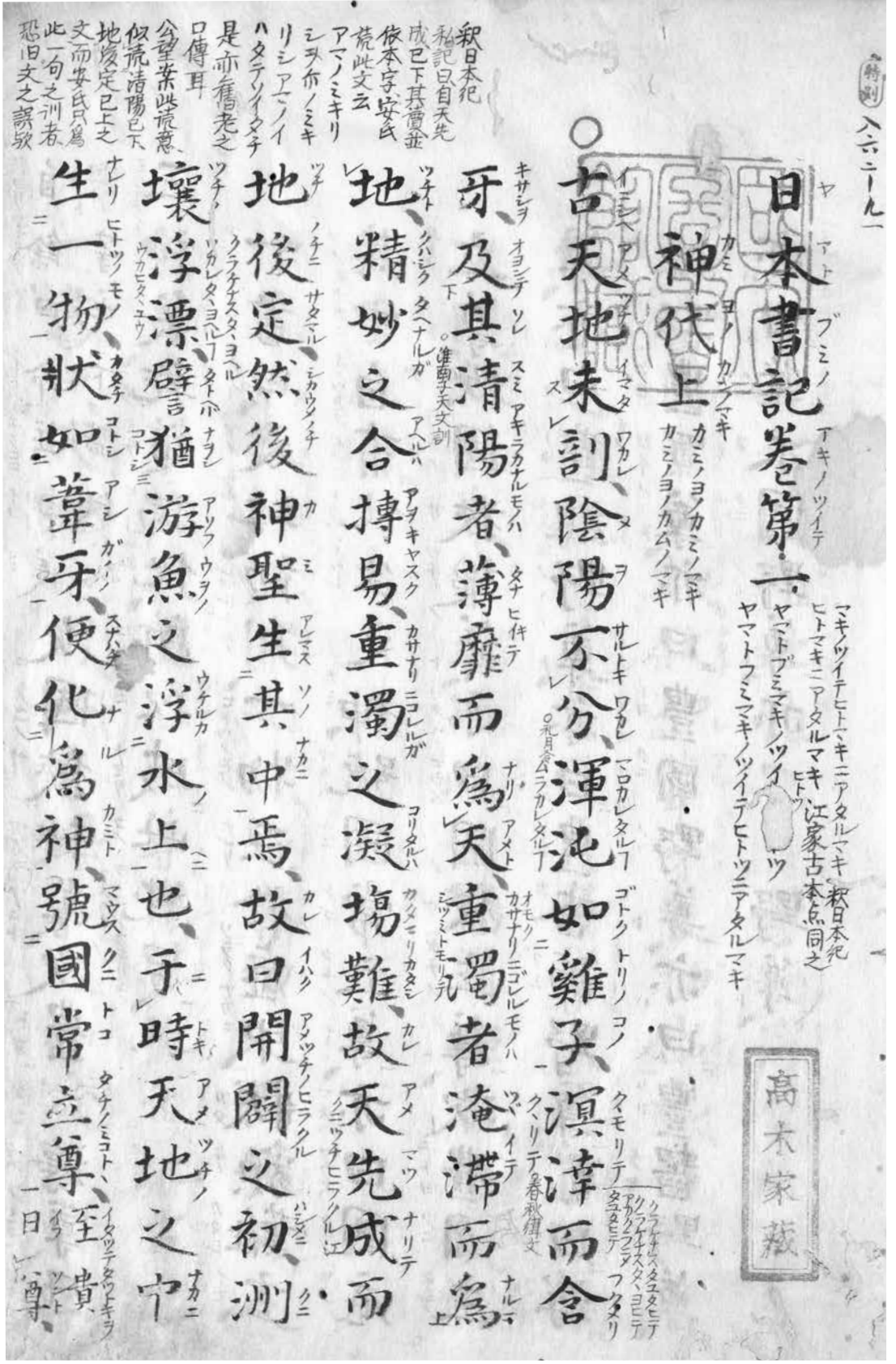
ムル馬ト云標或ハ旌或ハ扇ヲ以テ約ス

All throughout Japan's history, the *shinobi* acted as scouts and spies. They were even known to perform assassinations for territorial lords known as *daimyō*. There were many different schools or '*ryū*' of *ninjutsu* and each had a unique skill set as a specialty. For example, the *Togakure-Ryū* specialized in using forged metal hand-and-foot claws so they could climb trees, cliff faces and castle walls. These claws could also act as weapons that could be used against an opponent armed with a sword or spear.

A passage from a book mentioning Sekkō (Ukami). Here it explains that ninkō, or 'stealth scouts' are sometimes called 'kan' (間), 'Shinobi' (忍) and 'Tsuha/Suppa' (透破).
Source: 斥候 - 高知県立高知城歴史博物館 山内文庫



The opening page to the Nihon Shoki (photo: author's collection)

Illustration of a ninja training in yoko aruki or 'sideways-walking'
(From Ito Gingetsu's 1937 book titled Gendaijin no Ninjutsu, author's collection)

The history of *ninjutsu* in Japan is indeed very old. Prince Shōtoku's time was over 1,300 years ago. While he was the first major Japanese exponent of Sun Tzu's classical Chinese military manual The Art of War, a text which deals greatly with espionage and the use of spies, I personally believe it is highly likely that the Art of War had made its way to Japan via pirates and monks somewhat earlier, if only in bits and pieces. Prince Shōtoku, I feel, was simply the first man with real power in Japan to make use of the art of *ninjutsu* and *shinobi* spies.

However, with *ninjutsu* very few authentic records and historical materials have been left behind for us to study. This is because the *ninja* lived and worked in a secret society with strict rules and regulations. Their secrets were guarded with their lives and records were seldom kept that could expose them as *ninja*. What we mostly have left today to study in museums and various libraries are documents that came after the fact, after the school or '*ryū*' had died out. The mysterious truth about *ninjutsu*'s ancient beginnings is wrapped in the fog of our imaginations. But, as we will see,

the art of *ninjutsu* was greatly influenced by and possibly even born from the ways of *shugendō*, a highly syncretic and eclectic Japanese religion that originated in the Heian Period (794 to 1185 CE). I believe it is highly likely that the Shinano/Mount Togakushi region of the main Japanese island of Honshu may be the true location for the early development of *ninjutsu* in Japan and not the regions of Iga and Koga as is so commonly thought.

Hand claws (shuko) and armor of the Togakure Ryū ninja (Photos courtesy of Alex Esteve)

A shugenja, or a practitioner of shugendō walking on red hot coals in a traditional ritual (Photo courtesy of Robert J Hartung III)

Scholar Paul L. Swanson in *Shugendō and the Yoshino-Kumano Pilgrimage* says:

> *"Shugendō is a religious practice which took the form of an organized religion about the end of the Heian period (794-1184 CE) when Japan's ancient religious practices in the mountains came under the influence of various foreign religions. This loosely organized sect includes many types of ascetics, including unofficial monks (ubasoku 優婆塞), peripatetic holy men (hijiri 聖), pilgrimage guides (sendatsu 先達), blind musicians, exorcists, hermits, diviners, wandering holy men, and others."*

Modern female shugenja
(Photo courtesy of Robert J Hartung III)

According to *shugendō* researcher and author, Wakamori Tarō, during the Heian Period, the Mt. Togakushi area, along with neighboring Mt. Izuna, had a great number of the above-mentioned types of mountain ascetic warrior-monks living on the mountainsides and in the valleys.[2] Togakushi Mountain was the *Yamabushi's* spiritual mecca for undergoing their *shugendō* spiritual training. This was because, according to the Edo Period document titled '*Iizunayama Ryakuenki*', in March of the year 848 CE the nomadic Buddhist monk Gakumon Gyoja (学問行者) opened his *shugendō* training grounds here on Mt. Togakushi.[3] He is said to have been the first *shugenja* monk to climb the mountain ridges and perform a special ritual called *Kaizan* or 'opening of the mountain' (開山).

Map of Japan showing the locations of Togakushi Mt., Iga and Koga

2 修験道史の研究、Volume 2、和歌森太郎、弘文堂、 1980

3 天狗と修験者—山岳信仰とその周辺、宮本 袈裟雄、1989

According to legends, Gakumon threw his *vajra* scepter from Mt. Izuna (飯綱山) and when he went to investigate where it landed, Kuzuryu (九頭龍), a nine-headed dragon appeared accompanied by a poisonous and foul-smelling gas. Without hesitation the dragon stated to Gakumon that it was surprised that its odor did not kill him as it had killed many others in the past. It then explained in a very exhaustive exchange how it came to be the protective deity of the mountain.

In early records, this spirit was thought of as a nine headed *Oni* (鬼) or demon with only one tail but over the generations this legend slowly transformed into a dragon with nine heads. The location where Gakumon had the encounter later became the site for his school of *shugendō* at Togakushi Shrine (戸隠神社). For many centuries the straight and ancient pathway to the upper shrine has been cared for by the priests and beautifully lined with over 300 giant Cryptomeria trees.

The *Okusha* (奥社) or 'inner shrine', just up the path from the Kuzuryu Shrine dates to 210 BCE according to some Japanese historians. Most of what we know comes from much later around the year 684 CE, after Emperor Tenmu (天武天皇) funded an excursion through the area and had a map drawn. It was at this time that proper buildings were erected in the area.[4]

A monk chants while the wood burns into red hot coals (Photo courtesy of Robert J Hartung III)

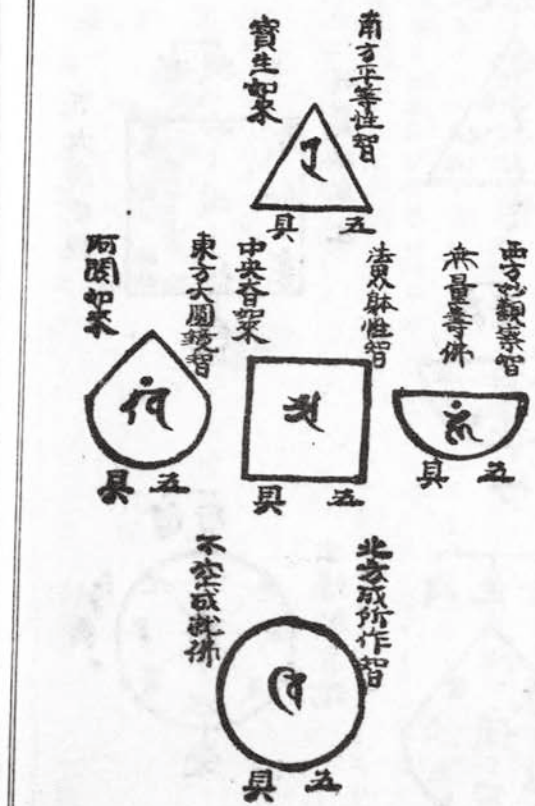
4 Wikipedia, Togakushi Shrine, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Togakushi_Shrine

One after another the shugenja stomp their feet across the hot coals (Photo courtesy of Robert J Hartung III)

Traditional image of En no Gyoja, the founding monk of shugendō. Gakumon Gyojya was a follower of En no Gyojya's teachings.

五輪建立觀

卽身成佛觀



A page from a 1918 shugendō Ritual book titled 'shugendō' by Mitsui Toyooki

Kuzuryu-sha or 'Shrine of the Nine Headed Dragon'

A total set of five major shrines were developed at Mt. Togakushi and the region became a traditional pilgrimage sight for the *shugenja*. It easily ranks in the same class as the *Shinto* Grand Shrine at Ise, Koya-san Temple and even Enryaku-ji temple. It has a beauty of its own that shows itself very differently in each season.

Okusha or 'Inner Shrine' at Togakushi Mountain

The historical name for the *shugendō* temple training ground at the *shinto* shrine was *Togakushisan Kansyuin Kenkou-ji* (戸隠山勧修院顕光寺). As typical for the time, the location was both a *shinto* shrine and a buddhist temple. Up until the 1868 CE, when the Emperor made his decree of '*Shinbutsu bunri*', or the separation of native Japanese *kami* from buddhas, it was common for temples and shrines in Japan to occupy peripheral locations.[5] During the second millennia of the common era two major esoteric buddhist sects, the shingon and the tendai, fought for dominance and control over the Togakushi Temple. It is recorded in the '*Nihon Shoki*' (日本書紀) that eventually, after some fighting and even an assassination, the shingon sect lost the battle and left Mt. Togakushi.

5 The Japanese City、Editors： Pradyumna P. Karan, Kristin Stapleton、University Press of Kentucky、 2015、P. 18

As discussed in Grandmaster Hatsumi Masaaki's book '*Ninpo Taizen*' (忍法大全) and the 1961 local history publication '*Uenoshi-Shi*' by the Iga Ueno government[6], *yamabushi heiho* (山伏兵法) or the techniques that were developed at the Togakushi *shugendō* training grounds later evolved into *ninpo* (忍法) or *ninjutsu* (忍術). This is in line with the oral history that Toda Shinryuken, the 32nd headmaster or '*sōke*' of the *Togakure Ryū*, taught to his grandson Takamatsu Toshitsugu. In essence, the Togakushi Mountain region is one of the major sources for the origins and development of *ninjutsu* in Japan.

Page from the 'Chikamatsu Zenshu', a collection of Shinano folklore.

According to local Shinano folklore as recorded in the '*Chikamatsu Zenshu*' (近松全集), in the year 940 CE, to deal with the circumstances that arose from a rebellion against the emperor called the Battle of Tengyo, Mochizuki Saburo Hiroshige (望月三郎広重), a Shinano *shugenja* warrior of the powerful Shigeno clan from a village just east of Mt Togakushi, was appointed by the emperor as regional governor and guardian of the Iga and Koka (Koga) domains. Taking up this position he changed his name to Koga Saburo Kaneie (甲賀三郎兼家) and later was enshrined at the Iga Ichinomiya Aekuni Shrine as the founder of both the Iga and Koga styles of *ninjutsu*.[7] The men of the Shigeno clan of Shinano had a long family tradition as *onmyodo* masters (陰陽師系) in the Shinshu area as well as being involved in *shugendō* and *ninjutsu*.[8] *Onmyodo* is the Chinese cosmological philosophy of the way of yin and yang. They were well known in the region for their methods of intelligence gathering and guerrilla warfare tactics. Therefore, for Emperor Daigo and his efforts in squashing the rebellion, they proved indispensable when they successfully harassed

6 上野市史、1961, P. 302, University of Michigan Library
7 望月氏の歴史と誇り、望月 政治 (著), 1969、 P. 257
8 Bulletin of the Folklore Society of Japan, Issues 30-36, Nihon Minzoku Gakkai, 1963, P. 10 & 29

the rebels under the command of Taira no Masakado during the Battle of Tengyo. The Shigeno clan received a special symbolic flag from Emperor Daigo himself as he was the one who gave them the order to go and kill Masakado.[9]

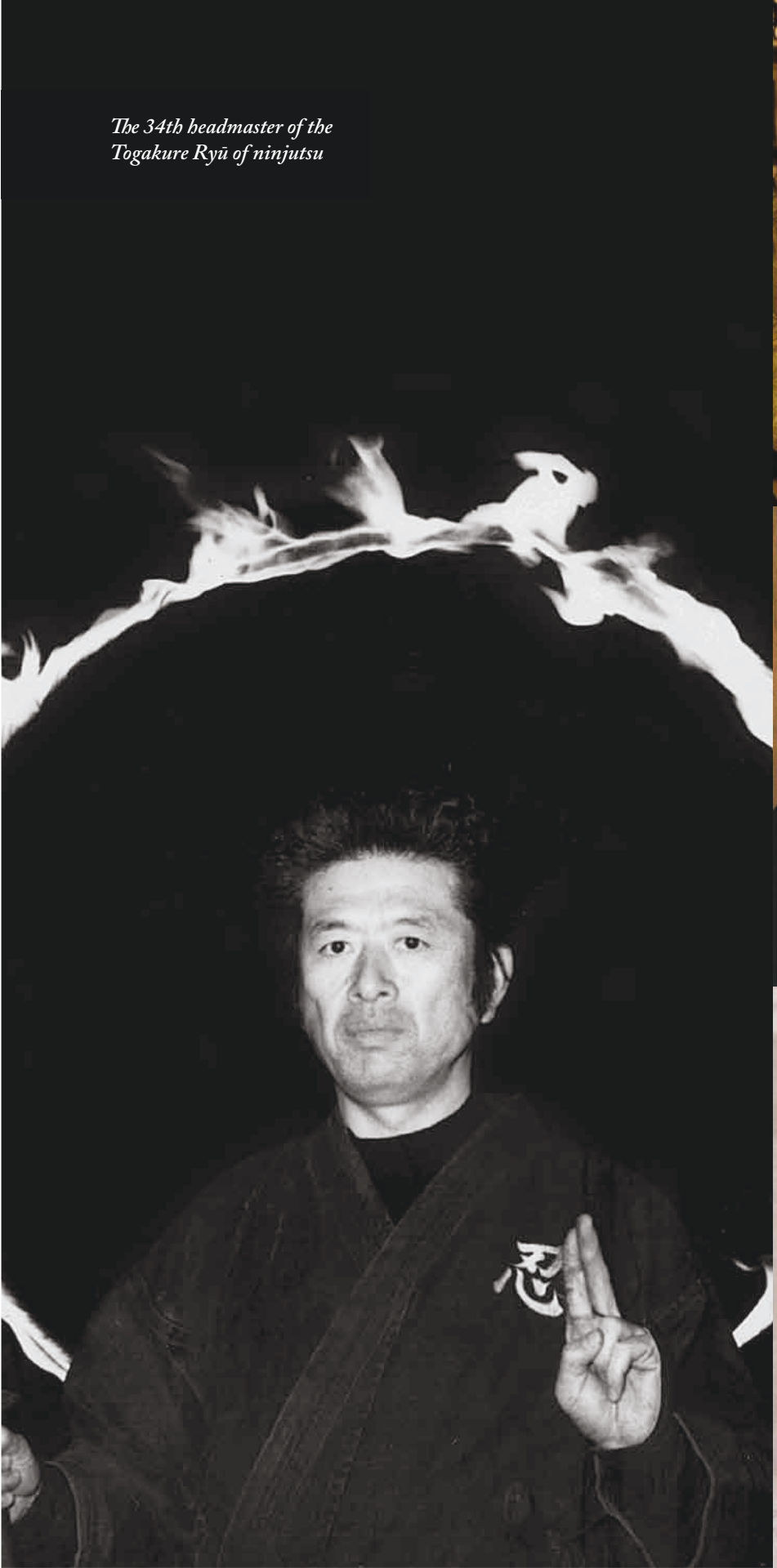
The Iga Ichinomiya Aekuni Shrine where Koga Saburo Kaneie is enshrined as the founder of Iga and Koga Ryū Ninjutsu. Photo author's collection.

If the above accounts are even partially factual it can be argued that the roots of all *ninjutsu* including those of Iga and Koga, lie in Shinano and Mt. Togakushi, just as Toda Shinryuken stated in the *Togakure Ryū ninpo* oral traditions. In the mid 1900's, for the first time in history, the highly secret *ninjutsu* traditions were preserved in traditional handwritten transmission documents or '*densho*' by the 33rd Grandmaster.[10] As I discuss later in this book, because *ninjutsu* was an inherited tradition, practiced in the shadows of history and run by the head of the family, never taught to outsiders like traditional *bujutsu ryu-ha* (武術流派) or martial arts schools, these were the first ever written documents to record the lineage of the Toda family's *ninja* and their path to the current 34th head of the school, Hatsumi Masaaki.

9 軍記物語と民間伝承、福田晃、1972、P. 210

10 Togakure Ryu Densho, Takamatsu Toshitsugu, Collection of Hatsumi Masaaki

The 34th headmaster of the Togakure Ryū of ninjutsu



Just a stone's throw away from Mt. Togakushi in Shinshu is Mt. Izuna. According to Japanese folklore historian, Miyamoto Kesao in his book titled *Minkan Shinko Jiten* (民間信仰辞典), there along with *shugendō* and *ninjutsu*, an ancient type of witchcraft called *Izuna-Ho* (飯綱法) was practiced. It was a type of fox-spirit magic that started in Shinshu and recorded legends say that the foxes that were used were small enough to fit into a bamboo pipe or about as big as a match box and would continue to multiply or replicate until there were about 75 of them. Izuna magicians, called *Izuna-Tsukai* (飯綱使い), would keep these creatures and use them to gain supernatural powers and make spiritual divinations. Some *Izuna-tsukai* made use of a fox called a *kuda-gitsune* (管狐) to predict the future and reveal prophecies.[11] But they also used it for evil purposes such as having the fox possess others or to make someone very ill. Depending on the local region, families that kept *kuda-gitsune* would sometimes be called '*kuda-mochi*' (*kuda*-keeper), *kuda-ya* (*kuda*-proprietor), and *kuda-tsukai* (*kuda*-user). Much like the witches of medieval Europe and early North American tales these practitioners of magic were intensely disliked by the common populace. In Yamaguchi Masayuki's 1981 *ninjutsu* research book titled '*Ninja no Seikatsu*' (忍者の生活) he explains that this Izuna form of magic was also commonly practiced by some *shugendō* monks at Mt. Togakushi and they used it as a form of *ninjutsu*.

During the Muromachi Period (1336 CE to 1573 CE) more of the Shigeno Mochizuki *ninja* clan relocated from the Mt. Togakushi area to Koga in the south and they took this shamanistic practice with them.[12] The skills of these Izuna/Togakushi mountain warriors were absorbed into the skill sets of the local Iga and Koga warrior groups. In an account from the Watanabe *ninja* clan of Koga, dated 1742 CE, this technique was still described as '*Izuna no Ho*' and the document details how the practitioner can gain the magical powers of the *kuda-gitsune*.

It sounds strange to our modern minds, but superstars like Hosokawa Masamoto, the deputy-shōgun of the Hosokawa clan, and many other famous military commanders of the Warring States period (1467 CE to 1603 CE) such as Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin had very strong faith in Izuna witchcraft.[13]

The bulk of the history of *ninjutsu* is without a doubt centered on the Iga and Koga areas and there are many books, especially in Japanese, on the history of the famous *ninja* of these regions. Therefore, I don't feel the need to go too deeply into the histories of Iga and Koga here. What I would like to make the reader aware of is that although both the *ninja* and the art of *ninjutsu* were made famous by the actions of the Iga and Koga warriors, it does not mean that the art necessarily originated there. According to my 'Hidden Lineage' hypothesis, which I will discuss later in this book, and the oral teachings of the *Togakure Ryū*, the true origins of the Iga and Koga *ninja* lie hidden in the past among the mountain tops and valleys of Shinano and Togakushi village.

11 語源博物誌, Volume 1, 山中襄太, 1976, P. 47
12 歴史読本, Volume 49, Issues 7-9, 新人物往来社 2004
13 名山の文化史、高橋千劒破、河出書房新社、 2007、P. 219

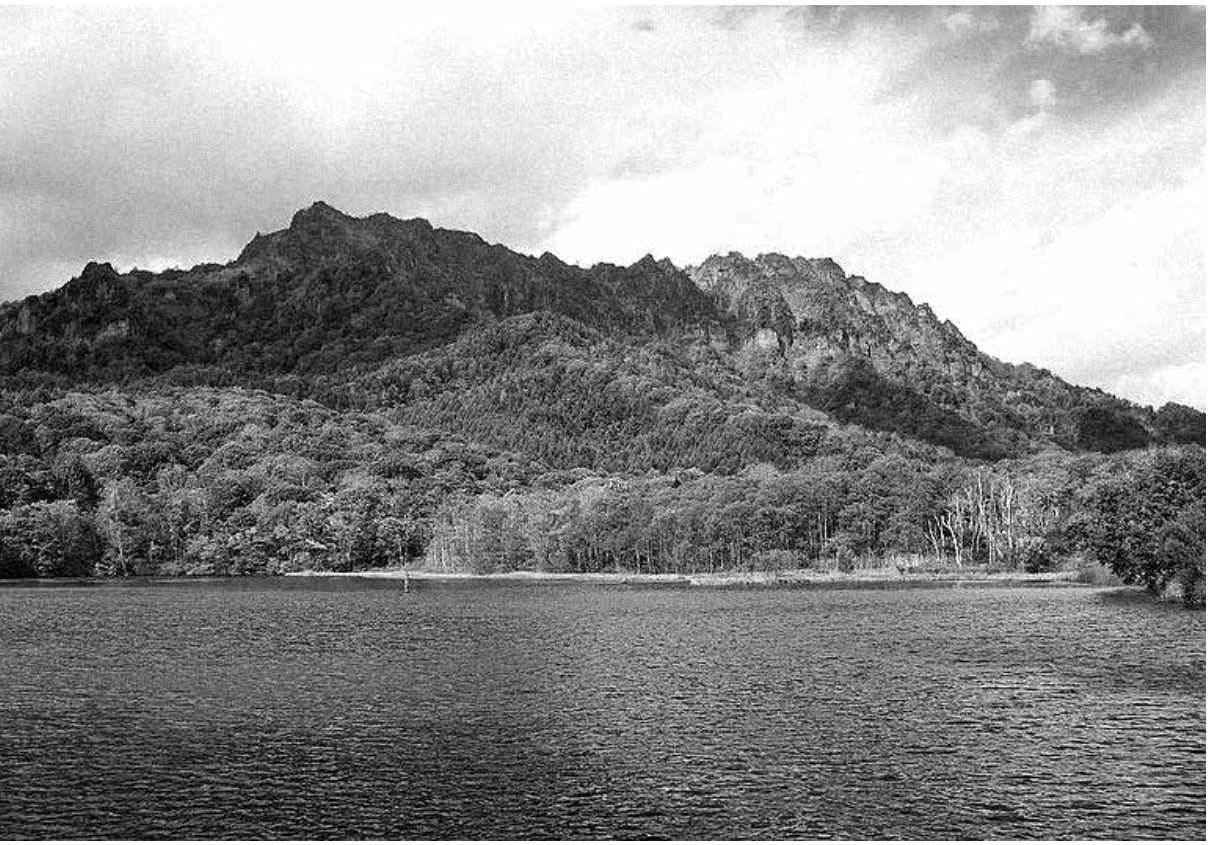
Togakushi satellite shrine in Tokyo
(Photo author's collection)

CHAPTER 2

THE INUKAI AND THE ORIGINAL WARRIORS OF MT. TOGAKUSHI

1800's print of the nine-headed single-tailed dragon at Togakushi (photo authors collection)

When looking at the history of any subject one generally starts with the beginning and works their way to the end, or to the current situation at the time of writing. Sometimes one might even work their way backwards, from the present to the beginning. In my research on the oral traditions of the Togakure lineage or *ryū* (流) of *ninjutsu* I have had to do both. As is often the case with secret societies and traditions, the trail goes cold at times and picks back up again later in history. Therefore, to make out a silhouette of this 'Hidden Lineage' of the most secret of professions, it was necessary to start at various points in time and find the thread that connected them all together.



The Togakushi Mountain chain of peaks where shugenja have undergone spiritual training for many centuries. Photo author's collection.

If we go to the beginning and examine the history of Mt. Togakushi from the time the mountain was first 'opened' and developed by its original inhabitants, we see that since ancient times, the chief *Shinto* priests of the Togakushi Shrine were members of the Agata Inukai clan for generation after generation.[14] In fact, in the old days the area where you begin to make your climb up Togakushi Mountain used to be called *Inukai no Sato* or 'the village of Inukai'.[15]

14 According to pamphlets and other media distributed at Togakushi Shrine the Inukai family have been the 宮司 or 'Chief Priests' of the shrine since ancient time. Only since the mid 1900's has the position gone outside of the immediate family.

15 富士・御嶽と中部霊山、鈴木昭英、名著出版、 1978、P. 113

The path leading from the old Inukai village area to the inner shrine at the base of the mountain, beautifully lined with Cryptomeria tress [16]

In the late 1300s CE, about one day's walking distance from Mt. Togakushi, the Inukai clan built a formal castle in Matsumoto. The early history of Inukai Castle is unknown but it appears that the location had been occupied by the Inukai clan for many generations before that in the form of a mountain fortress. The strategic location allowed for unobstructed views of the entire Matsumoto plain and was naturally defended by cliffs on the west side. As the powerful Ogasawara clan flourished and took control over the Matsumoto plain during the Muromachi Period (1336 CE ~ 1573 CE), the Inukai clan were taken in as retainers and as a result the clan grew even larger in wealth and power in the area. Although there are very few historical records for Inukai Castle, historians say it was being protected by Inukai Hanzaemon (**犬飼半左衛門**) when it finally fell to Takeda Shingen in 1553.[17]

This peaked my interest and led me to investigate the possibility of the Inukai family being associated with the original *ninjutsu* of the Mt. Togakushi area. I quickly learned that the Inukai clan (**犬養氏**) are a very ancient and noble family. They were originally wolf-dog breeders for the early imperial court, hence the name 'Inukai' (**犬**dog, and **養**to nourish and raise). Over time some branches of

16 This Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons image is from user Chris 73 and is freely available at //commons.wikimedia.org

17 **長野県の武田信玄伝**, **笹本正治**, 1996, P. 56

the clan changed the second written character to 飼. Others use the characters 犬甘.[18] These versions are still pronounced the same (Inukai) but the second character is written differently. Since Inukai written as犬養 and later as 犬飼 is the branch of the clan that we are looking at around Togakushi Mountain, I decided to focus mainly on the history of this branch for this book.

Ruins of a trench at the Inukai Castle ruins in Matsumoto (photo author's collection)

Looking at the rituals and rites at the Inukai family shrine on Mt. Togakushi, we see that the middle shrine houses Omoikane (思兼命), the deity of wisdom and intelligence while the inner shrine houses Ameanotajikarao no Mikoto (天手力雄命), the deity of athleticism and physical power. In a later chapter I will discuss how this enshrined *Shinto* spirit Amenotajikarao no Mikoto of the inner shrine is the same spirit that the *Togakure Ryū ninja* ancestor, Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami, brought with him from Togakushi to his new home in Iga when he escaped there after a bitter loss to the Heike Clan.

18 太田亮、「縣犬養　アガタ」『姓氏家系大辞典』第1巻、上田萬年、三上参次監修 姓氏家系大辞典刊行会、1934

Amenotajikarao no Mikoto (天手力雄命), throwing open the stone door to the cave that Amaterasu, the sun goddess concealed herself in. Photo author's collection

Shintoism is Japan's native religion and practice of worshiping various *kami* (神) or spiritual powers that manifest in natural places such as mountains, rivers and other forms of nature including people and animals. In the oldest Japanese myths and *Shinto* hierarchy, the above-mentioned Amenotajikarao no Mikoto is the child of Omoikane and one of the many other official names he went by is Aitatsu no Mikoto (阿居太都命).[19]

The Agata Inukai Clan (県犬養氏) is the same previously mentioned Inukai (犬飼) clan that historically always held the position of chief *Shinto* priests at Togakushi shrine. They founded the village at the base of Togakushi Mountain and proudly claimed to be the descendants of Aitatsu no Mikoto. In other words, the Agata Inukai clan believed they had a connection to the Mt. Togakushi area since the age of the gods. So, as I mentioned earlier, it is highly likely that the form of *shugendō* and *ninpo* that developed at Mt. Togakushi was heavily influenced by the Agata Inukai clan as they were the people who founded this modest village in this remotest of mountainous places. Many members of the clan became local samurai in the Shinano/Togakushi areas as they developed and started to deal with the courts and shogunate. From their mountain fortress they supported Togakushi Shrine and defended the Matsumoto plains. Some of the Inukai samurai of Togakushi formed specialized units that became famous for utilizing military style trained wolf-dogs and engaged in clandestine intelligence activities.[20]

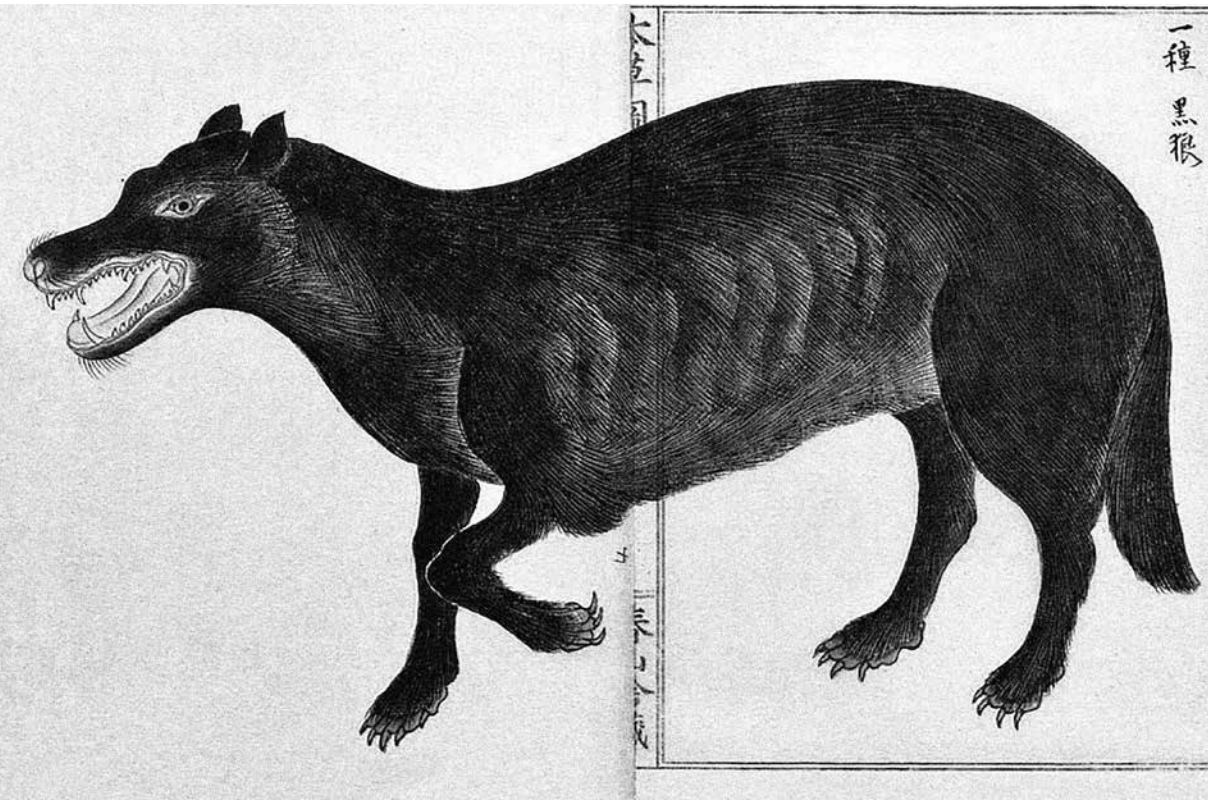


Illustration of the native Japanese wolf from an 1850's text. Photo author's collection.

19 日本書紀伝、鈴木重胤、1912、p.17
20 信濃史蹟, 福山寿久 1912

Today, it is believed by various historians that the Inukai clan relocated to the Mt. Togakushi area from the court in Yamato (now Nara) because of their family trade. As mentioned earlier, for generations they had bred dogs and wolf-dogs for the imperial court. The new lands being opened by the emperor were still wild and full of beasts and vermin, so the imperial court employed the Inukai-bred wolf-dogs to clear the area of these unwanted creatures. Farmers would not succeed in harvesting valuable and much needed crops from the area if monkeys, mice etc. had not been removed from the area and exterminated.

As may be expected there are many interesting links between the Inukai family and *ninjutsu*. In my research I found many fascinating military points about the family. For example, not only did the Inukai breed dogs and wolf-dogs for the court but they were also heavily involved in court security. While digging for more clues I came across the (Japanese) National Historic Dictionary. In this text it states that at the Nagaoka Imperial Palace in Nara the Inukai served as gatekeepers.[21] At the palace there were twelve gates. Three of those gates were named The Agata Inukai Gate (**県犬養門**), The Umi Inukai Gate (**海犬養門**) and The Waka Inukai Gate (**稚犬養門**). The Agata Inukai clan were the protectors of the grain warehouses for the prefecture. This is what the Agata (**県**) or 'prefectural' part of their name represents.[22] The Umi Inukai were the protectors of the warehouses at the ports hence the name Umi (**海**) or 'sea'. The Waka Inukai were in-house royal breeders of wolf-dog pups and therefore have the character Waka (**稚**) or 'young' at the front of their clan's branch name. These three branches of the Inukai clan were ancient and powerful families originating from the court in Yamato. They held positions as retainers and vassals to the infamous and powerful Otomo Clan (**大伴氏**).[23] Throughout Japanese history the Inukai held positions related to security and the wolf-dogs that they bred were used to support these roles. These wolf-dogs were a mix of native hunting hounds and the wild wolf. Early in Japanese history, in 663 CE, forty-two thousand Yamato (Japanese) troops were sent to the Korean peninsula during the battle of Hakusukinoe.[24] This was a battle between the south western Korean peninsula Baekje restoration forces and their ally, Yamato Japan, against the allied forces of Silla and the Tang Dynasty of ancient China. For this mission several hundred possibly even thousands of the Inukai-bred military wolf-dogs were transported overseas by ship to fight and do battle.[25] This alone should give you an inclination of the value of these war dogs.

As the generations passed, new communities appeared at the various locations that the Inukai clan helped develop. The clan started to take on the responsibility of policing clean water sources for these villages. Native Japanese religious faith and divinity researcher, Fukuda Hiromichi, reports in his book focused on Japanese native faiths that give certain animals divine status, that the Inukai wolf-dog breeders also came to be the people to call when farmers started to fight and riot over water sources.[26] In this way, step by step. the Inukai clan worked their way into becoming *jizamurai* (**地侍化**) or local samurai of the areas they helped develop.[27]

21 『国史大辞典』（吉川弘文館）1979
22 世界大百科事典 第2版『県犬養氏』
23 戦国大名探究 出自事典 地方別武将家 大名一覧
24 Farris, William Wayne, Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500–1300 AD. Harvard University, Cambridge 1995
25 日本水軍史、佐藤和夫、原書房、 1985、P. 395
26 神使になった動物達、福田博通, 2012
27 'History of the Old Castles', Accessed August 22, 2018, http://takayama.tonosama.jp/html/inukai.html

More evidence indicating the importance of the Inukai clan can be found during the reign of Emperor Goichijo (1008 ~1036 CE). This is when the famous warrior Minamoto no Yoriyoshi attacked and killed the great military commander Tachibana no Sumitora. To pull off such a feat, it is said that Yoriyoshi enlisted the help of the Inukai clan as they were known to be skillful at guerilla-style warfare. In the Yamatsumi Shrine's chronicles (**山津見神社由緒書**) still preserved today in the shrine's administrative office, it is documented that a large white wolf assisted Yoriyoshi with his attack. [28]

A few hundred years later, during the Nanboku-Cho Wars (1331-1392 CE), a vassal of the Nitta Clan named Hatta Tokiyoshi went into battle with a lightly armored wolf-dog he called *Inushishi* (**犬獅子**) or 'Dog-Lion' (not to be confused with the chow-chow dog of today by the same name). This was a cross breed of dog and wolf specially raised in Shizuoka by the breeders of Abe no Ookura. This wolf-dog was so fearsome it earned the reputation of being able to attack multiple warriors on the battlefield and quickly dig tunnels under castle walls to make sneak attacks.[29]

These wolf-dogs were also used to carry messages,[30] especially in the case when a castle was surrounded by an enemy. They were so well trained that they could silently sneak up to an enemy camp and return letting their master know through body language if the enemy were awake or asleep. [31] Once asleep, the humans would send special units

Hata Tokiyoshi and his beloved 'Inushishi', this breed of wolf-dog was famous for digging holes under castle walls for sneak attacks

28 月間歴史手帳、Vol.13、名著出版、1985、P. 53

29 埼玉の日本一風土記: 埼玉が誇る自然・歴史・文化を訪ねる読み物ガイド、関根久夫、2010、P. 244

30 Japan and Things Japanese, Mock Joya, 2006, Chapter 5 'Dog Soldiers'

31 Same as above (28)

to attack, break a hole in the enemy line and make their escape. Tokiyoshi is said to have used this technique to escape once and learned how to train and use these wolf-dogs in Shinshu from the Inukai Clan.[32]

The Japanese winter mountain hunters known as the *matagi* are a tributary branch of descendants of the Inukai Clan. Due to local oral traditions, it is speculated by modern historians they may have been secretly employed by the Tokugawa government to perform clandestine missions in the Kōshū region (modern day Yamanashi Prefecture).[33] Later in the Edo Period (1603–1868 CE), the Shogun himself is said to have personally employed *matagi* to spy on distant *daimyo* lords far from his own domain. Historically we know that the Nikko Toshogu Shrine was issuing letters of license to the Shogun's *matagi* to freely travel back and forth between the boundaries of the lands, possibly to complete their secret missions. [34]

In summary, the Inukai family were renowned for breeding and raising hunting dogs for the early imperial family. Later as the imperial domain grew larger, we see them take on other roles such as pest control, keepers of the imperial warehouses, chief priests of shrines, breeders of military wolf-dogs, keepers of water sources, riot control police, scouts, guerilla warfare soldiers, local samurai, *ninja*, mountain priests, and even *matagi* winter hunters.

Japanese Matagi hunters in 1926. Photo: Shinjo Digital Archives

32 Same as above (27)
33 国文学解釈と教材の研究、Volume 20、 1975、 P. 127
34 Noseru: Tekiya no Sekai, Nagai Hirō, 1982, Page 106

CHAPTER 三

THE TODA LINEAGE OF THE TOGAKURE RYU

In the first two chapters I discussed the origins of *ninjutsu* and its possible connection with the original Inukai people of Mt. Togakushi and the land of Shinano. What I would like to discuss next is the lineage and practice of the *Togakure Ryū* that is still in existence today, taught through the Bujinkan Dōjō of Hatsumi Masaaki Sōke.[35]

At present, the *Togakure Ryū* is enjoying a true golden age in terms of the number of people practicing. According to the Bujinkan Dōjō headquarters in Noda City, Japan, there are currently several hundreds of thousands of registered members throughout the world. However, just 70 years ago the *Togakure Ryū* was practiced by only a small handful of people including, Takamatsu Toshitsugu and his pupil, Hatsumi Masaaki.

'Hanare Mutsuboshi' or the six star family crest of the Toda Clan. These are the end-pieces of roofing tiles from Matsumoto Castle. Photo courtesy of Alex Esteve.

35 Traditionally the term Sōke means 'head of the family' or the 'originator' of a tradition. In the case of the Bujinkan martial arts it is best to think of the term as 'headmaster' or even 'grand-master'.

Takamatsu Toshitsugu (born as Hisatsugu), at the turn of the 20th century inherited the *Togakure Ryū* from his maternal grandfather, Toda Shinryuken, but apparently planned on taking his family's *ninjutsu* secrets to the grave with him.[36] Fortunately, in the mid 1950s when Takamatsu was in his 70s, he found a worthy inheritor. To our benefit, the current headmaster, Hatsumi Masaaki Sensei was selected and the secrets and traditions of the *Togakure Ryū* were passed on for another generation.

The oral history of the lineage of the Toda family's *Togakure Ryū* to the present day is as follows, but it is extremely important to note that this list is not meant to be taken as 100% historically accurate, especially where it concerns names and dates before the Toda family. It is merely a story of how the art came to be and should be taken in that spirit. As is common with all things concerning *ninja*, it is unclear where historical facts end and legends begin. One key point to keep in mind when reading is that due to the secretive nature of the *ninja* and their art, this was an oral history that wasn't written down until the 20th century.

The most important difference between an oral history and a traditionally documented history is the personal nature of the former. Oral traditions typically involve stories about individuals who tell their life stories or focus on a certain aspect of their history. In the

36 As per a personal poem written by Takamatsu to Hatsumi stating that he had found his heir after many years of believing he would take his secret arts to the grave with him. Collection of Hatsumi Masaaki, Noda City Japan

Togakure Ryū's case, these stories focus on the ryuha's involvement in a particularly important historical event, the fall of Lord Kiso Yoshinaka and his vassal Nishina Daisuke's escape to Iga to settle down with the *ninja* there.

An oral history is one person, family or clan's point of view. Documented histories are a series of investigations together in one story. As for historical validity, oral histories, since they are the memories and stories of individuals, must have their facts checked carefully before being relied upon.

Traditional written histories such as those found in *Koryū budo* or classical Japanese martial arts typically use a variety of sources which may include oral traditions, documents, official reports, letters, diaries, etc. They are generally written in the third person and with a scholarly tone. The documents transmitted to students of *Koryū budo* traditionally always record their headmaster lineages which establishes both authority and credibility.

As you can easily see by visiting the museums in Japan related to *ninjutsu*, there are nearly no *makimono* or scrolls that document the lineage of a *ninja* family. Everything was word of mouth when it came to their histories. Granted there are many *ninjutsu* documents out there but most of the time they were technical documents geared towards passing on a certain set of knowledge or skills rather than identifying a history of a particular lineage. That was always meant to be kept secret and taken to the grave. There was no benefit to writing anything down that may incriminate you or your family. According to one researcher at the University of Mie associated with the *ninja* research program there, "*ninjutsu* was mostly passed on directly from father to son, there was no rank and therefore their family tree was their art's lineage. In the case of the *shinobi* warriors this always had to be kept hidden.[37] This is the reason for so few *ninjutsu* documents with lineages and rank titles".

Although an oral history is only one part of a complete traditional history, it can provide a personal angle to a more widely-known general narrative. The *kuden* or 'word of mouth' tradition is a natural way of passing on information from people who actually lived the story. The people who lived through the events or periods involved and want to share not only the story of what happened but also how they experienced what happened. It is not meant to be the final word of the story, just a part of it.

As one of the traditional tortures for a *ninja* who was caught and exposed was to be boiled alive in a cauldron full of oil, oral traditions were much safer for the Toda family than keeping documents that could incriminate them as *shinobi*.

37 From a private conversation with Mr. Yuta Sakai of the *Shinobi* Gaku Research Program, Iga City, Japan.

CEREMONIAL LINEAGE OF THE TODA FAMILY'S TOGAKURE RYU

1. 仁科（戸隠）大助 Nishina (Togakure) Daisuke
2. 志摩小三太源兼定 Shima Kosanta Minamoto no Kanesada
3. 戸隠五郎 Togakure Goro
4. 戸隠小三太 Togakure Kosanta
5. 甲賀鬼三太 Koga Kisanta
6. 金子友春 Kaneko Tomoharu
7. 戸隠龍法 Togakure Ryuho
8. 戸隠岳雲 Togakure Gakuun
9. 木戸小石 Kido Koseki
10. 伊賀天龍 Iga Tenryu
11. 上野利平 Ueno Rihei
12. 上野千里 Ueno Senri
13. 上野万二郎 Ueno Manjiro
14. 飯塚三郎 Izuka Saburo
15. 沢田五郎 Sawada Goro
16. 大猿一平 Ozaru Ippei
17. 十又八郎 Hachiro Kimata
18. 片岡平座衛門 Kataoka Heizaemon
19. 森宇源太 Mori Ugenta
20. 戸田五兵衛 Toda Gobei
21. 神戸青雲 Kobe Seiun
22. 百地幸兵衛 Momochi Kobei
23. 戸張典善 Tobari Tenzen
24. 戸田盛柳信綱 Toda Seiryu Nobutsuna
25. 戸田不動信近 Toda Fudo Nobuchika
26. 戸田観五郎信安 Toda Kangoro Nobuyasu
27. 戸田英三郎信正 Toda Eisaburo Nobumasa
28. 戸田新兵衛正近 Toda Shinbei Masachika
29. 戸田新五郎正良 Toda Shingoro Masayoshi
30. 戸田大五郎近秀 Toda Daigoro Chikahide
31. 戸田大三郎近繁 Toda Daisaburo Chikashige
32. 戸田真竜軒正光 Shinryuken Masamitsu Toda
33. 高松寿嗣翊翁 Toshitsugu Takamatsu
34. 初見良昭 Masaaki Hatsumi

This lineage was originally an oral secret carried by the people that survived a massive invasion of Iga by Oda Nobunaga in 1581 CE which will be discussed later. It was carried during the peaceful Edo Period (1603~1868 CE) and made its way into modern times due solely to the efforts of the Toda, Ishitani and Takamatsu families. It is not a complete list of all the masters of the *Togakure Ryū*. It is simply the lineage that the Toda family respected as their direct link to the source. Several branches of the school developed as time went on, but all surviving branches led back to the Toda family in the Edo Period.

As was discussed in chapter one and two, there was without a doubt a close relationship between *shugendō* and Mt. Togakushi. In 1181 CE a young samurai by the name of Nishina Daisuke became a retainer to Kiso Yoshinaka (木曾義仲), a general of the late Heian period and member of the Minamoto clan during the Genpei War with the Taira clan.[38]

Daisuke had learned a great variety of skills from his long experience with Togakushi and Izuna *Shugendō*. But, after Lord Yoshinaka was eventually killed in 1184 CE Daisuke escaped to Iga to hide in the mountains. There he shared his native *shugendō* and martial skills with the warriors of Iga and in exchange he acquired the secrets of Iga *ninjutsu*. Later he was credited as the founder of the *Togakure Ryū* of *ninjutsu*.[39] The legendary pioneer of *Togakure Ryū ninjutsu* that later became known as Togakure Daisuke was in fact Nishina Daisuke, who changed his name to Togakure to hide his identity and honor his homeland.[40]

The execution of the ninja Ishikawa Goemon and his son Goroichi. Here Goemon is holding Goroichi above his head to keep his son out of the boiling oil.

38 真説・日本忍者列伝、小山竜太郎、荒地出版社、1964、P. 60

39 歴史読本、 Volume 49 、Issue 7-9、 新人物往来社、 2004、 P. 77

40 歴史読本、 Volume 55、 Issue 5、 新人物往来社、 2010、 P. 276

Togakushi warriors from the Shinshu Togakushi Advocacy Story [41]

41 信州戸隠御擁護奇談 3巻, Author's collection

The *Togakure Ryū* of *ninjutsu* has been handed down to this day in secret, generation after generation since the times of the founder. When we think of *ninjutsu*, *Iga Ryū* and *Koga Ryū* come to mind first and are surely the most famous but only the *Togakure Ryū*, a sub school of the *Iga Ryū*, is still active today as an authentic school of *ninja* martial arts.

Some characteristics of the Toda family's lineage of the *Togakure Ryū* are that it is a martial art for defensive purposes only, that respects peace and does not aim to attack. The philosophy is simple, protect yourself, protect your family and protect your lord.[42]

Even when facing the enemy directly, do not initiate an attack from yourself and use stealth to take away the opponent's opportunity and ability to fight. Such a defensive technique is extremely advanced and it is no easy skill to master without a great deal of hard training. It is said that a master of the *Togakure Ryū* can defeat his enemies with no weapons.

The golden era when many renowned *ninja* warriors such as Hattori Hanzo played an active part was from the Kamakura Period through the Sengoku Period (1192 to 1603 CE).[43] They were often employed by *daimyo* lords to carry out special missions that did not appear on the 'front page' of Japanese history. Later, in the peaceful Edo period, gathering information served as the main role of the *ninja* for the lords of the various regions. This led to a somewhat surprising association between falconry and *ninjutsu*, as I will describe in more detail in a later chapter.

The Toda *ninja* of the *Togakure Ryū*, whenever possible, were hired by regional warlords as active intelligence officers. They would carry out their missions then return to Mt. Togakushi to further their learning and training. However, when agents were scattered all throughout the country they would live a life that was no different from the ordinary people they were among.[44] If anyone found out that they were a spy the results would be terrible. There were special, inhumane, treatments and tortures specially reserved for spies and *ninja*.[45]

The four basic skills of *Togakure Ryū* training include:[46]

- Long hikes, up to 150 kilometers in a day so the warrior can cover lots of ground in a short period of time and relay important intelligence as soon as possible.
- Walking, running, punching and kicking on ice with high *Geta* (下駄) clogs. In warm weather a wooden floor could be covered with hard round soybeans. This training is to increase the warrior's sense of balance.
- Carrying four water tanks on a pole across the shoulders and running. This is to increase the stamina and strength of the legs and improve the ability to jump great heights and distances.
- Running up tree trunks and vertical wooden planks. This is to give the warrior the ability to easily escape when being actively pursued.

Furthermore, there is a lot of advanced training in other skills such as unarmed combat, swordsmanship, spear, stave arts, leaping and jumping techniques, the study of astronomy, mathematics, gunpowder, medicine, etc. These skills all needed to be

42 忍法大全、初見良昭、講談社、2013、P. 98
43 Ninja - The Invisible Assassins, Andrew Adams, Black Belt Communications, 1970, P. 35
44 From a private conversation with Japanese Historian Aoki Kyoji (青木教司) 2017
45 図説日本拷問刑罰史、笹間良彦、柏書房、1996、 P.223
46 出版ニュース、 Issues 1256-1273、 1982、 P. 98

Kiso Yoshinaka fighting with two tengu. Tengu are legendary creatures found in Japanese folklore and are often associated with shugendō. From the Biyū Suikoden 美勇水滸伝
(photo author's collection)

mastered. A *ninja* was not only to be physically fit but also to possess a high degree of intelligence. We can say that *ninja* were true masters of both the scholarly and warrior ways.

Many clues and hints about the history of this 'Hidden Lineage' have been left behind for us within the writings of Takamatsu Toshitsugu, the 33rd headmaster of the tradition. According to the current headmaster, Masaaki Hatsumi, in a personal conversation with the author, the first time the art's history and traditional techniques were written down on paper was during the mid 1900s. Until then it was a highly secret oral tradition passed on only within the Toda, Okuni and Ishitani families for around two hundred years. But this does not mean that it was passed on via the memorization of oral sayings only.

Ninjutsu is mainly passed on directly through one on one physical training with a master and this includes the many *kuden* or teachings that are passed on by word of mouth only. When I state that the Toda lineage of the *Togakure Ryū* was a secret oral tradition, I mean that the family itself never kept any documents identifying themselves as *ninja* or as being members of any one *ryū*. To do so would only lead to a short tradition that would not get passed on for long and potentially the end of that clan. It's important to remember that there was no punishment for being a *ninja* that was not excruciatingly painful and didn't involve long periods of torture before finally receiving the most dreadful death. Where possible, relatives and friends of a captured *ninja* would be tortured and killed as well.

In the *makimono*, or scroll, that Takamatsu wrote for Hatsumi Sensei it states that all *ninja* before the early 1500s (Eishō period) were not known as *Iga Ryū*, *Koga Ryū* or by any other *ryū*'s name.[47] In fact, in most cases they did not go by the term *ninja* (忍者) or even *shinobi*

47　忍法大全、初見良昭、講談社、2013、P. 42

Running up planks or walls, the art of Shoten-no-jutsu. From Ito Gingetsu's 1937 book 'Gendaijin no Ninjutsu'. Photo author's collection.

(忍び) at all. They were simply the warriors who lived at Mt. Togakushi or even in Iga and Koga. While the term *ninja* did exist at that time, today modern society has started to use the term '*ninja*' in a much wider and broader sense. For example, the following historical categories of elite warrior units all now very easily fall under the modern term *ninja* (忍者) as we use it today.

Shinobi (志能便)
Ukami (伺見)
Kanja (間者)
Rappa (乱破)
Onmitsu (隠密)

Regionally, *ninja* were also called by the following terms:[48]

Kyoto and Nara:
Suppa (水破), Ukami (伺見), Dakko (奪口)

Yamanashi:
Suppa (透破), Suppa (透波), Mitsunomono (三ツの者), Suppa (出抜)

Nigata and Toyama:
Nokizaru (軒猿) Kanshi (間士),
Kikimonoyaku (聞者役)

Miyagi Region:
Kurohabaki (黒脛巾)

Aomori Region:
Hayamichinomono (早道の者), Shinobi (陰術)

Kanagawa Region:
Kusa (草), Monomi (物見), Rappa (乱破)

Fukui Region: Shinobi (隠忍術)

48 Iga Ninja Museum Website, www.iganinja.jp (Accessed August 24, 2018)

Historically speaking, both the Iga and Koga regions were originally loyal to the emperor. But during the mid-1500's the warriors of Koga sided with Ashikaga Yoshitane when he went to the Omi domain to strip the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshizumi of his title and take control of the Shogunate.[49] The warriors of Iga and Togakure didn't side with the Ashikaga Clan or their Shogunate government, staying loyal to the emperor and for that reason it naturally caused friction and tension between the regions. From this point in history and onwards, these warriors were clearly separated into *Iga Ryū* and *Koga Ryū ninja* due to this political difference. The Toda family lineage of the *Togakure Ryū*, as mentioned earlier, was a sub group of the *Iga Ryū* and therefore was loyal to the imperial family even while serving the Shogunate during the Edo Period.

According to Takamatsu, after his grandfather Toda Shinryuken resigned from the Shogun's military academy as a sword instructor in 1858 CE, other members of the *Togakure Ryū* continued to serve within the ranks of the new Imperial army.[50] This was at a time when the Tokugawa Shogunate persecuted and executed those who did not support its foreign trade policies and who supported the Emperor and his newly formed and modernly equipped military. This purge against the perceived traitors of the Shogunate was ordered by the Shogunate Chief Elder of the Counsel, Ii Naosuke, on behalf of the government. It was mercilessly carried out to quell all opposition to the Shogun and his new trade treaties with the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France and the Netherlands. Over 100 people from various stations in life were victims of this crackdown. Some were forced out of positions within the *Bakufu*, traditional *Han* leadership, and from the Imperial Court in Kyoto. The persecution did not end until the assassination of Ii Naosuke.

As I mentioned earlier, according to the oral account of Takamatsu's grandfather, during this time the Toda family *ninja* served the Imperial Court. Allegedly, along with imperial spies they successfully infiltrated and corrupted the famous *Shinsen Gumi* (新撰組) or the Shogunate security force that patrolled the cities of Edo and Kyoto.[51] This may not have been so difficult as Toda Shinryuken was an instructor at the Shogun's military academy where many of the *Shinsen Gumi* were recruited. It even appears that Toda's colleague at the military academy, Takahashi Deishu, became the head of the original group called the *Shinchou Gumi* that later evolved into the *Shinsen Gumi*.[52]

Also, according to Takamatsu, in 1863 CE at the Battle of Yamato (大和の乱), many of the *Togakure*, *Iga* and *Koga ninja* fought under the banners of Yoshimura Torataro (吉村寅太郎) and Fujimoto Tesseki (藤本鉄石) on the side of the *Tenchugumi*.[53] Sadly, when the flag was raised, and the fighting began, most of the *ninja* quickly died in battle along with Yoshimura Torataro. In Takamatsu's scroll it states that at the time of the fall of the *Bakufu* government there were many small wars that the *Togakure Ryū ninja* served in.[54]

49 忍法大全、初見良昭、講談社、2013、P. 42

50 "Members of the Togakure Ryū continued to serve within the ranks of the new imperial army" is the same as above (45). "Toda Shinryuken resigned from the Shogun's military academy as a sword instructor in 1858" is from 戦国忍法図鑑、初見良昭著、新人物往来社、 1978

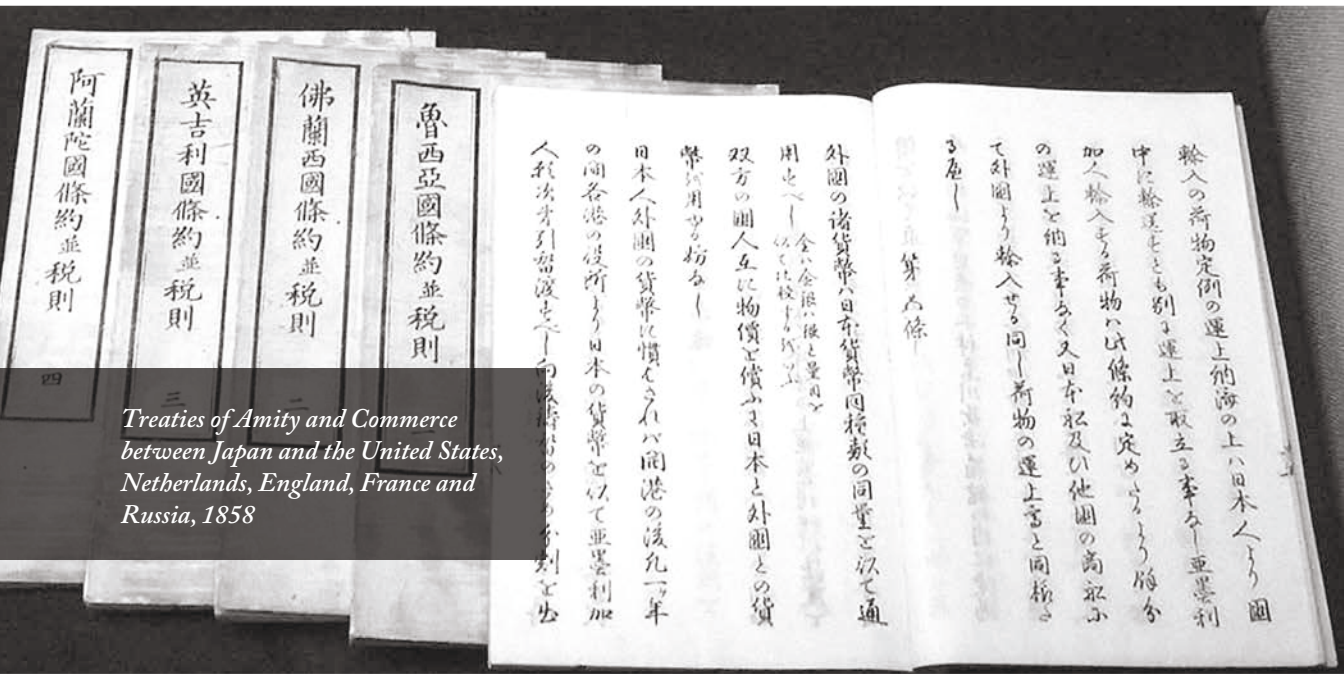
51 忍法大全、初見良昭、講談社、2013、P. 42

52 明治維新人物辞典: 幕末編、 奈良本辰也、 至誠堂、 1966、 P. 239

53 忍法大全、初見良昭、講談社、2013、P. 42

54 忍法大全、初見良昭、講談社、2013、P. 42

Ii Naosuke, executer of the purge



Treaties of Amity and Commerce between Japan and the United States, Netherlands, England, France and Russia, 1858

Toda Shinryuken had wisely decided to stay out of the above battles for reasons I will discuss later and thus the *Togakure Ryū* survived the civil wars between the newly formed Imperial Army and the outdated Shogunate, only for the art to explode into an exciting worldwide phenomenon in the mid to late 1900's.

According to Master Takamatsu, in 1863 CE at the Battle of Yamato, many of the Togakure, Iga and Koga Ryū ninja fought under the banners of Yoshimura Torataro (below) and Fujimoto Tesseki on the side of the Tenchugumi.

CHAPTER 4

THE SANADA CLAN AND TOGAKURE RYU NINJUTSU

The famous Sanada clan of the Shinshu region used *shugenja* from Togakushi as soldiers and *kancho* (間諜), an old regional name for *shinobi* warriors, and they performed remarkably well under the military strategist Sanada Yukimura.[55] The family records of Takeda Shingen say his clan took *shugenja* from both Togakushi and Izuna as *suppa* (透波) and *mitsumono* (三ッ者), old regional terms for *ninja*, into their service.[56] It is unlikely that the terms '*Togakure Ryū*' and '*Ninja*' were in common use in the early 1500s in the Shinshu region.

Sanada Yukimura, the famous military strategist who employed shugenja from Togakushi as information gathering agents known as kanchō

Shugenja, while generally thought of as peaceful ascetics in search of the powers of holy mountains and sacred sites, were also highly organized and involved in a wide variety of political activities. In fact, the various *shugenja* mountain cults played a bigger part in Japanese history then most tend to realize.

55 戦国闘将伝十文字槍の天才軍師真田幸村、戦国歴史研究会　PHP研、2008、P.90

56 戦国闘将伝十文字槍の天才軍師真田幸村、戦国歴史研究会　PHP研、2008、P.93

A yamabushi befriending a fox in the mountains[57]

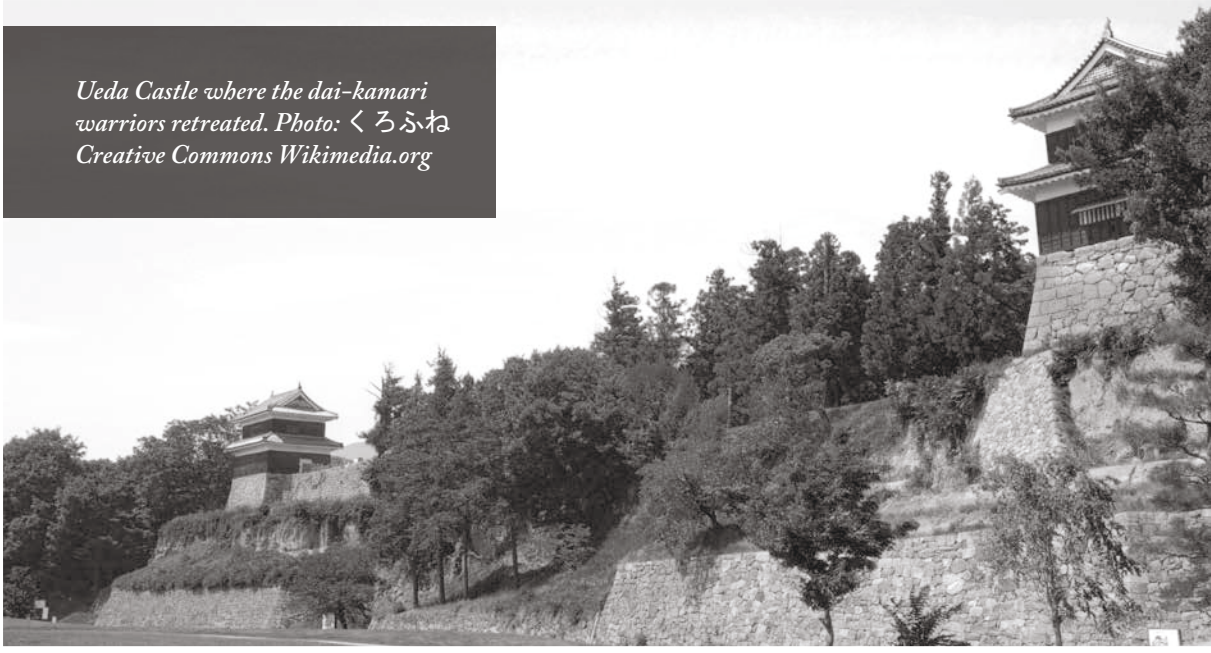
These hardy monks, also known as *yamabushi* (**山伏**)[58] were often recruited by lords to work as spies and mountain commandos and also to perform religious blessings for their men, campsites and even the horses.[59] Another useful skill was to act as secret messengers -- due to their great leg and hip strength derived from living and walking in the mountains and their knowledge of secret paths, they were able to carry information over great distances very quickly. Stuart D. B. Picken writes in his book on the essentials of *shinto*:

> “They also became involved with the great ninja masters of the martial arts; so good were the shugenja at disappearing and re-appearing that they were likened to the tengu, legendary ‘demonic’ creatures who haunted mountain regions. Shugenja were often used as soldiers; not infrequently, vanquished lords escaped disguised as shugenja.”

57 **賽山伏＝狐修怨 : 2巻、 畊書堂唐丸 撰、 蔦屋重三郎、 寛政 10 (1798)**
58 **全国石仏石神大辞典、中山慧照、リッチマインド社、 1990、 P. 526**
59 Essentials of *Shinto*: An Analytical Guide to Principal Teachings, Stuart D. B. Picken, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1994, P. 27

In August of 1585 CE, at the command of Tokugawa Ieyasu, Torii Mototada, Ōkubo Tadayo and Hiraiwa Chikayoshi attempted to suppress the Sanada clan with 7,000 soldiers and attacked their home base at Ueda Castle. Exactly what happened at this battle remains quite mysterious as there are very few primary records detailing events. But it is known that the battle had actually started even before Tokugawa Ieyasu's forces arrived at Ueda Castle. The Sanada clan attacked with guerilla warfare units when Ieyasu's men were still in route. The day before Ieyasu's men were due to arrive, the Sanada clan had pre-emptively hidden a large group of *shugenja* and *shinobi* from Mt. Togakushi and Mt. Iizuna. This special unit were called the *dai-kamari* (大かまり) and were hidden in a geographically strategic area near the Castle.[60] They attempted to surprise attack Ieyasu's army but failed. Somehow Ieyasu was aware of the pending attack ahead of time and was prepared to fend them off. The *dai-kamari* then retreated and regrouped at Ueda Castle with the Sanada clan leadership.

In Shinano, the warriors who performed *ninja* type of missions such as scouting, reconnaissance and intelligence gathering activities in small numbers were called *suppa* (素破), but when operating in a large group they were called *kamari*.[61] In this case the word *dai* (大) or 'big' in front means a very large group of *kamari*. Usually *kamari* operated in a group size of about 30 to 50 *shinobi* but in large cases such as this battle at Ueda it could be upwards of 2,000 to 3,000 warriors,[62] hence the term *dai-kamari*. These warriors would lay in ambush in the shadow of the mountains and hide in the villages as commoners. Their mission was to kill the enemy's intent to continue an attack and to disrupt the enemy army as much as possible by using special guerilla warfare strategies and tactics.



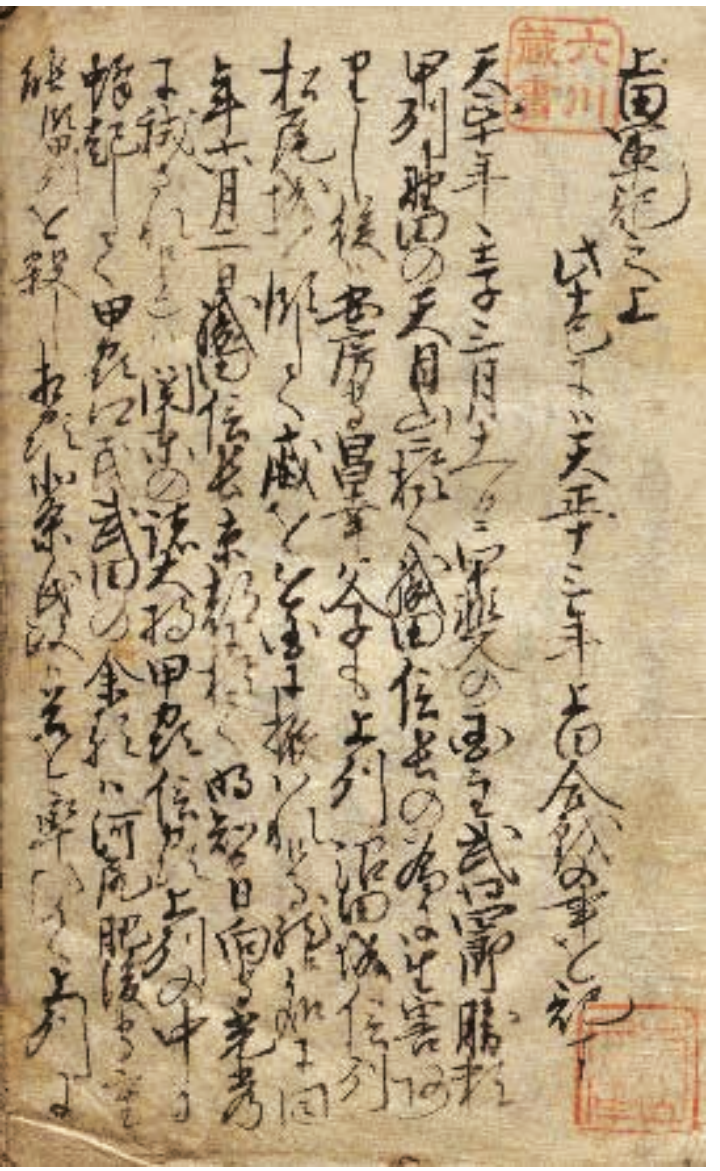
Ueda Castle where the dai-kamari warriors retreated. Photo: くろふね Creative Commons Wikimedia.org

60 真田信之　父の知略に勝った決断力、　平山優、　PHP研究所、 Sep 15, 2016

61 真田信之　父の知略に勝った決断力、平山優、PHP研究所、 2016、"多数の忍びの集団(「大かまり」)を伏兵として小諸の深沢(深沢川)に配置し"

62 Sanada Nobushige.com, http://sanada-nobusige.com/2016/03/23/okamri/ Accessed August 26,2018

Skeptical Japanese historians are often of the opinion that the Sanada *ninja* history is just exaggerations and fantasy, that it was simply created by the Sanada clan for propaganda-style historical novels after the battles were over, thinking that this would strengthen their popularity in the country. But the *ninja* leader of this battle at Ueda, Ideura Masasuke (出浦昌相) was in fact a real person.[63] Some Japanese historians do not like to call him a *shinobi* or *ninja* and will only refer to him as a leader of *suppa* but let's face it, he is what we consider today a type of *ninja*. According to Japanese historian Nagaoka Osamu, author of '*Stories of the Izu Navy*', *suppa* is just another name given to people who performed *ninja*-like activities that did not come from the Iga or Koga regions.[64]



Ueda Gunki, a Sanada family military chronical describing the exploits of the clan and their shinobi (Photo author's collection)

The decisive battle that eventually led to the establishment of the *Tokugawa Bakufu*, or the last *Shogunate* style government to control Japan before the country was forcefully opened to economic trade and diplomatic policies by Commodore Perry of the United States Navy, was the *Battle of Sekigahara* (関ヶ原の戦い). On October 21st, 1600 CE, Sanada Yukimura and his father Masayuki, attacked Tokugawa Hidetada's massive army of 40,000 men on their way to *Sekigahara* with only 3,000 of their own warriors, but this smaller army of brave men fought with intelligence and trickery. For example, they feinted to withdraw and then ambush their pursuers with snipers while doing so. They also cut open a river that had been previously blocked to cause a flood and drowned many of the enemy. It seems that Hidetada thought they would be an easy enemy to defeat, but in the end his army took huge casualties and had to retreat themselves. This skirmish caused Hidetada to arrive late to the battle at Sekigahara, failing to help his father with his narrow but decisive victory.[65]

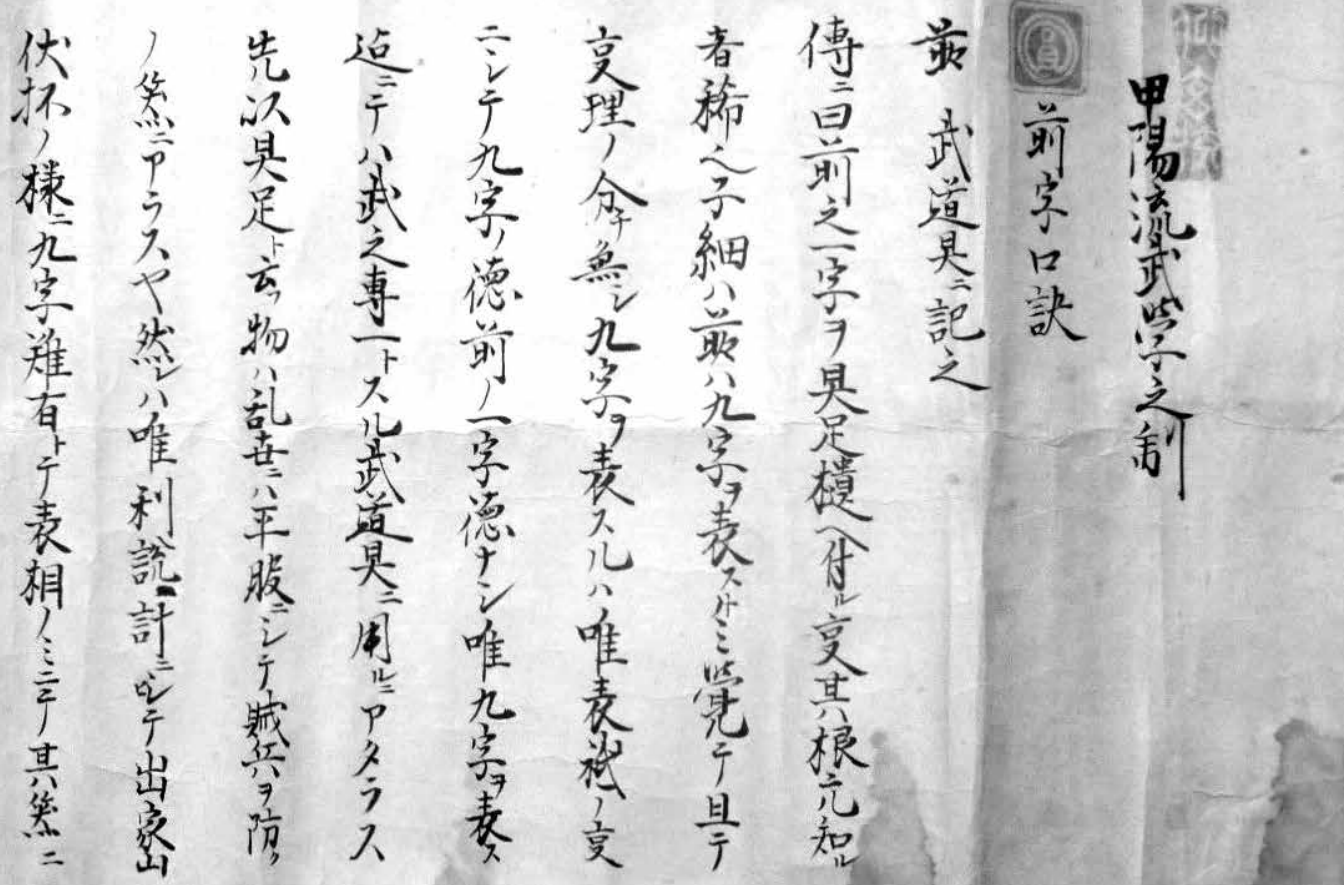
63 長野県歴史大年表Vol 1、長野県歴史大年表刊行会、郷土出版社、1987、P. 251
64 伊豆水軍物語、 永岡治、 中央公論社、 1982、 P. 135
65 軍師真田幸村、近藤精一郎、新人物往来社、 1974、 P. 223

Hidetada's lateness made Ieyasu so furious he knocked Hidetada to the ground and began kicking him and beating on him. Their relationship never recovered.

Later, when the Sanada clan again fought the Tokugawa at the Siege of Osaka, after a long hard battle dealing with Yukimura's *ninja*-style guerilla warfare, Ieyasu's men finally cornered Yukimura on the battlefield. It is said he had collapsed from exhaustion and was sitting on his battlefield stool when he was approached. He stood up one more time to do battle and history says this is when he died. But, there is an alternate history that says Ieyasu was so frustrated and angry with him that he secretly arrested Yukimura on the battlefield and made him repeatedly drink boiling water until he died.[66] The Togakushi *ninja* that served under Yukimura specialized in this frustrating style of appearing and disappearing guerrilla warfare techniques.[67] While the Sanada family themselves were not *ninja*, they did employ various groups of *shinobi* for information gathering purposes and guerilla style warfare units.

Sanada Masayuki, father of Yukimura

66 真田太平記、Vol. 19、池波正太郎、講談社、1999、P. 357
67 忍びの世界、http://fusigi.jp/works/works_7_1.html, Accessed August 26, 2018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Kōyō Ryu document describing a method of kuji no ho. Photo author's collection.

Three styles of military science that we know the Sanada clan utilized are the *Togakure Ryū* (戸隠流), the *Kōshū Ryū* (甲州流) and the *Kōyō Ryū* (甲陽流).[68] With their *shugenja* and *ninja* retainers, the Sanada clan survived and thrived through the harsh severity of the *Sengoku* or 'warring states' period (1467 CE to 1603 CE) by constantly reorganizing, engaging in information warfare activities and striking at the heart of the enemy with hit-and-run style tactics.

The roots of the Sanada family are with the Shigeno Clan, just as was the case with Mochizuki Saburo Hiroshige (望月三郎広重) from the Mochizuki clan, the Togakushi region warrior from chapter one who was sent to Iga by the emperor and later enshrined there as the founder of *Iga* and *Koga Ryū*. In the 1974 publication '*Military Master Sanada Yukimura*' by Kondo Seiichirou, the author states that from the time the Sanada established themselves as a separate clan from the Shigeno, they had already held a deep relationship with *ninjutsu* and the local *shugenja*.[69]

During the *Sengoku* period, *Togakushi no Sato* (戸隠の里), the village where the Inukai clan developed and built their shrine at Mt. Togakushi, was within the Sanada clan's territory. This is the reason why the Sanada clan, even from the time of Lord Sanada Yukitsuna (真田幸隆 1513 to 1574 CE), Masayuki's father and Yukimura's grandfather, could successfully bring in *shugenja* from Togakushi and Izuna as *shinobi*. The new special units were later to become the cornerstone of the Sanada clan's military prowess. As *ninjutsu* had been long practiced at Mt.

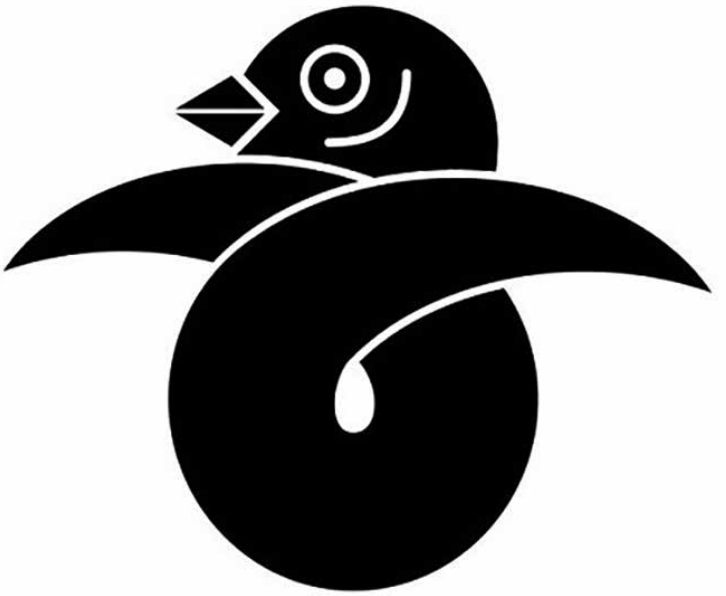
68 武藝流派辭典、綿谷雪、人物往來社、 1963、P. 129
69 軍師真田幸村、近藤精一郎、新人物往来社、1974、p. 73

Togakushi already, it is fair to say that Takeda Shingen and Yamamoto Kansuke were heavily influenced by the *Togakure Ryū* when they devised, organized and developed the *Kōshū Ryū* and the *Kōyō Ryū* into becoming major intelligence networks.

In 2018 I had a discussion with the Sanada clan and Japanese warfare historian Kyoji Aoki (青木教司), at Matsumoto Castle near Togakushi regarding the *Togakure Ryū*. He said that professionally he could not comment regarding if the Toda family that ruled from Matsumoto Castle for nine generations and the Toda family of the Toda-*Togakure Ryū ninjutsu* lineage are related but he also said that I should read the 'History of three Generations of the Sanada Family' (真田三代実記), a historical narrative of Sanada Yukimura, Sanada Masayuki and Sanada Yukitaka. He admitted that although it is not first-rate evidence as it is an account of history told in the narrative form, it is indeed enough evidence to say that *shugenja* of the Mt. Togakushi region were at least rumored to have been in the service of the Sanada family at the time the chronicles were written around the year 1702 CE. He went on to say that there are exaggerations everywhere in the account but that it did contain a description of the Sanada family recruiting *shugenja* from Izuna and Togakushi.

Another interesting point is that the Sanada historical family home has two family crests on the roof plate. One is six circles in two rows of three on top of each other, and the other is a stylish bird called the *Musubi Karigane*. These odd-looking birds are also traditionally found on the *Fuda* worship plaques of Togakushi Shrine. This second conspicuous family crest was mainly only used by the Sanada family during peacetime. It is based on the migratory bird called *Kari*, most likely because this type of wild goose is said to be a lucky bird that brings fortune and happiness.

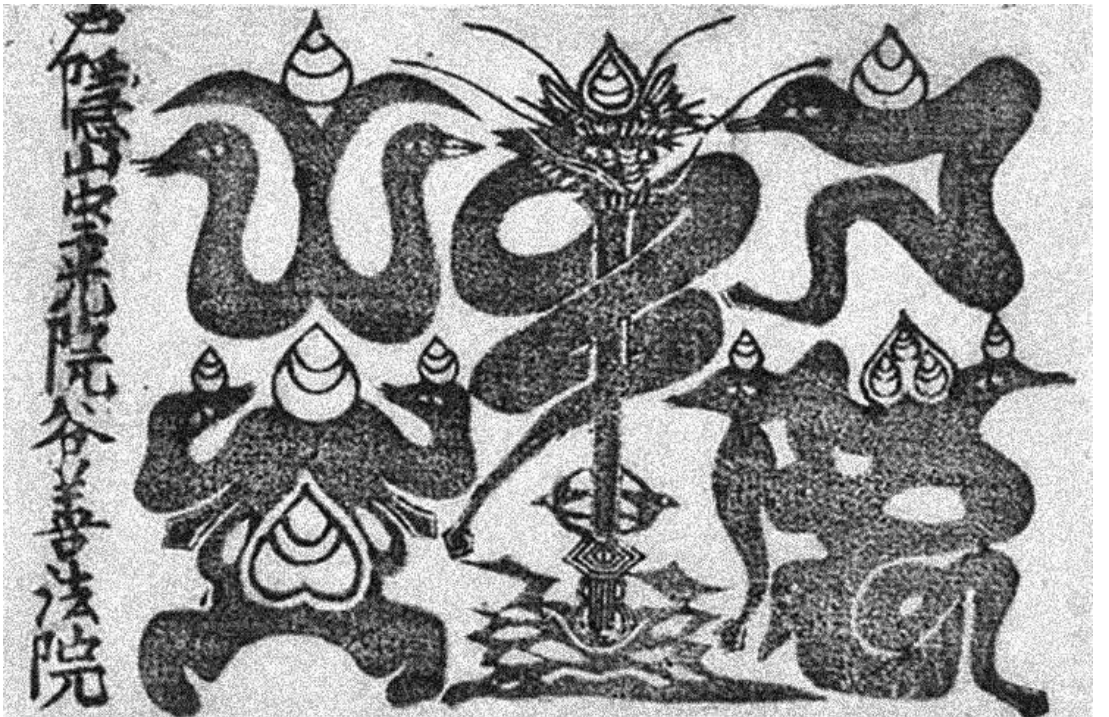
A page from a copy of the Sanada chronicles showing Takeda Shingen, the founder of Kōshū Ryū ninjutsu (top right) and Sanada Masayuki (bottom left) listening to Yamamoto Kansuke (bottom right) give military advice.



The Sanada family crest, the Musubi Karigane

It's safe to say that most *ninjutsu* enthusiasts are aware of the legends of Sarutobi Sasuke (猿飛佐助). This brave warrior was a Sanada clan *ninja* who appears in *kōdan* (講談), a traditional Japanese style of public storytelling. The topic is controversial but there are researchers who argue that this Sarutobi Sasuke is a fictional character based on legends of the historical Sarutobi Nisuke (猿飛仁助). I will discuss Nisuke in a moment but first let's look at the legend of Sasuke first.

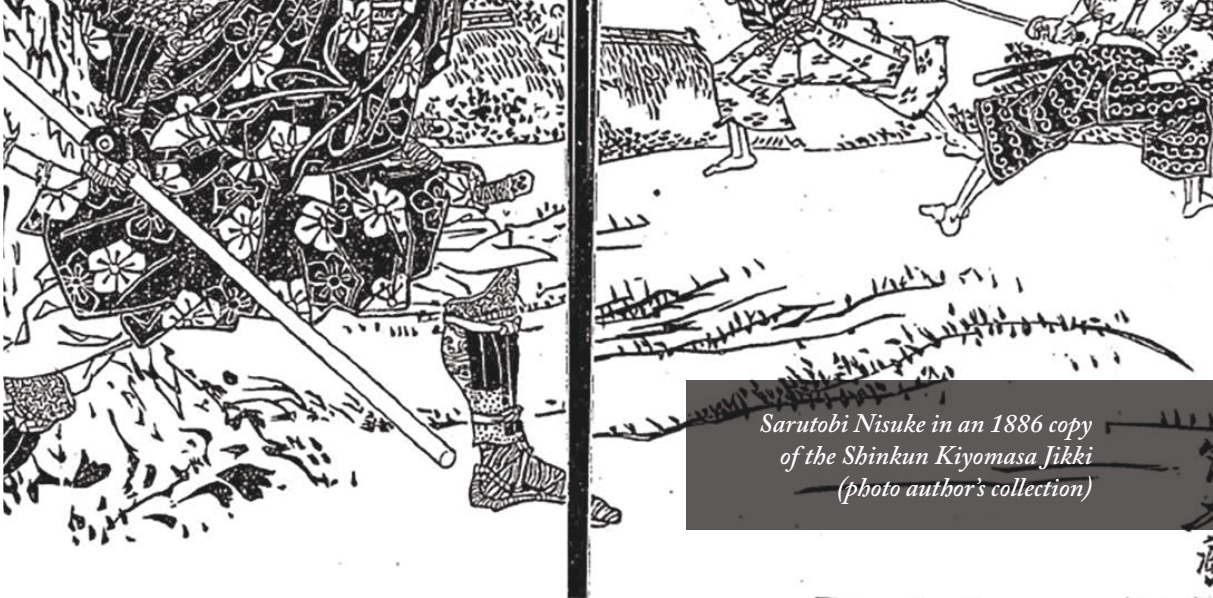
Old print from Togakushi Shrine showing the Sanada Karigane bird being used to write out the characters 'Togakushi Yama'



According to the story, he was discovered as a young boy by the lord Tozawa Hakuunsai (戸澤白雲斎) of the Tozawa mountain stronghold that served the Sanada clan. Hakuunsai came across him while Sasuke was playing with monkeys jumping from tree to tree in the mountain's valley. [70] He was said to have the agility and speed of a monkey and could keep up with them in the trees. The *kōdan* stories about Sarutobi Sasuke were a big hit in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Even in modern times he is occasionally still portrayed on Japanese television and in cinema. The nimble Sasuke is most well known as the leader of a legendary group of ten *ninja* that served Sanada Yukimura. The most prominent stories about them are about the Siege of Osaka Castle at the end of the Sengoku period. Folklore about Sasuke says that he died of wounds at the Siege of Osaka in 1615 CE but another legend says he snuck into Tokugawa's camp at night only to get his foot caught in a trap. Hacking off his own foot to escape, he made it to a safe place to take his own life instead of being tortured.

The historical Sarutobi Nisuke was first mentioned by Katō Kiyomasa (加藤清正1562 – 1611 CE) in his *Shinkun Kiyomasa Jikki* (審訓清正実記) in the early edo period. In this narrative-style war history manuscript, Kiyomasa writes about a man named Sarutobi Nisuke. Although in the manuscript Nisuke is never described as or mentioned as a *ninja* or *shinobi* per say, he is described as a *Nobushi* (野武士) or a person who takes the armor and weapons of fallen samurai on the battlefield and joins a group of bandits in secret communities hidden behind the mountains far away from the capital. Often these *Nobushi* are fallen samurai themselves who lost their status and group together with agricultural workers and farmers to raise an army.

70　猿飛佐助 : 真田家三勇士著者玉田玉秀斎　講演、松本金華堂、1910



Sarutobi Nisuke in an 1886 copy of the Shinkun Kiyomasa Jikki (photo author's collection)

The document says that during the Battle of Anegawa in 1570 CE, Sarutobi Nisuke led a group of mountain bandits and attacked Toyotomi Hideyoshi's men when they were attempting to recover from an extremely tough battle. Two of Hideyoshi's men, Hachisuka Hikoemon (蜂須賀彦右江門) and Hibi Roppuro (日比六太郎) recognized Nisuke. They were old friends of Nisuke and convinced him through great debate that siding with Hideyoshi would be the right thing to do for him and his band of men. In the end Nisuke along with his 3,000 men switched sides and joined the forces of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. To some *ninja* historians this *Nobushi*, or mountain bandit, could very possibly be the roots for the legend of Sarutobi Sasuke. Other scholars and historians also believe that Nisuke could possibly have been Sasuke's son. We may never know.

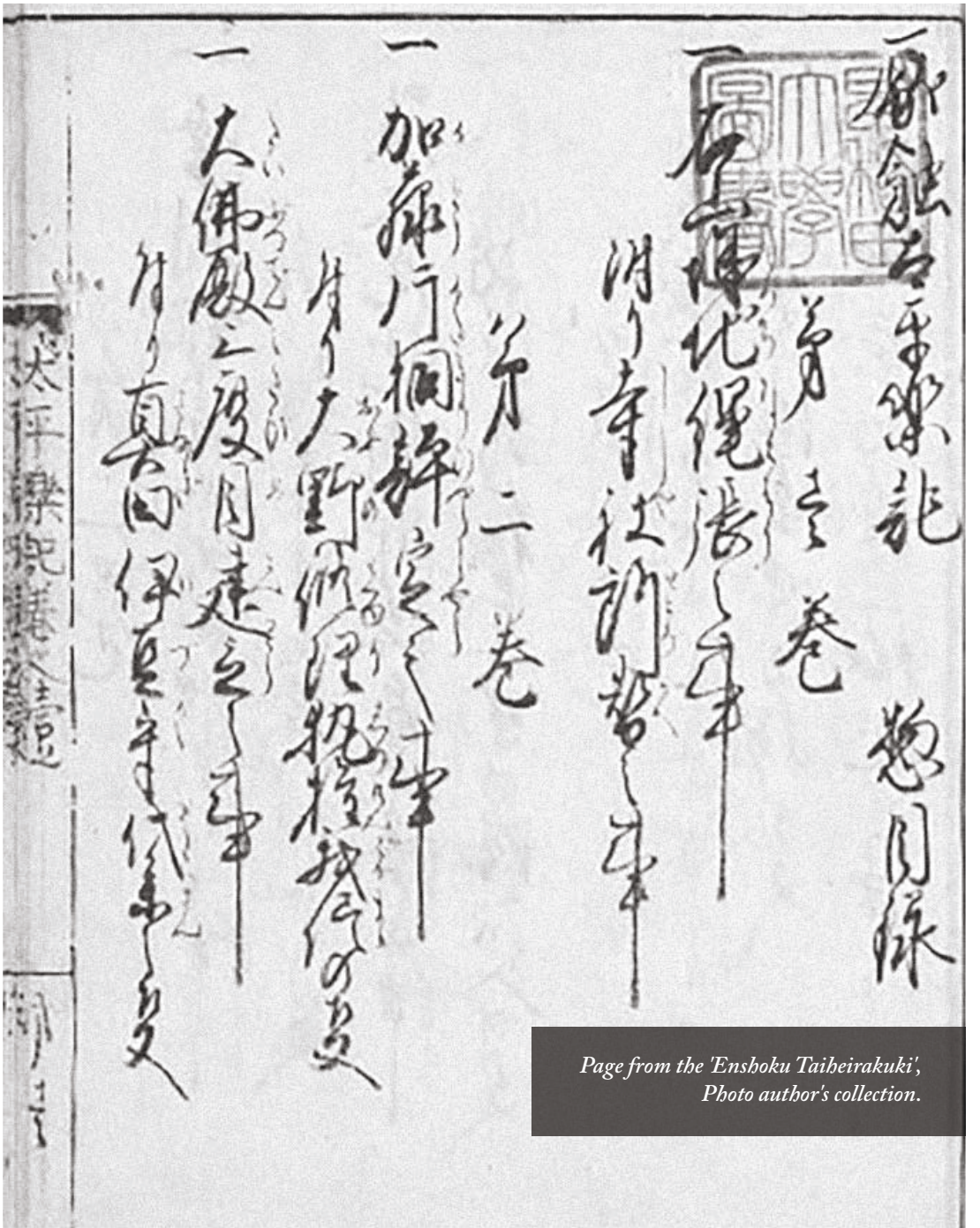
Old print of Hachisuka Hikoemon, Photo author's collection.

But even with all this assumption and guess work, the name Sarutobi Sasuke that is thought to be legend and just part of kōdan literature in fact does appear in other older writings. In the *Enshoku Taiheirakuki* (厭蝕太平楽記) Sarutobi Sasuke is mentioned as being a vassal of Sanada Yukimura (1567–1615 CE), just like many other *shugenja* from the Togakushi region.

From Stories of Sarutobi Sasuke (1925) by Muramatsu Shofu

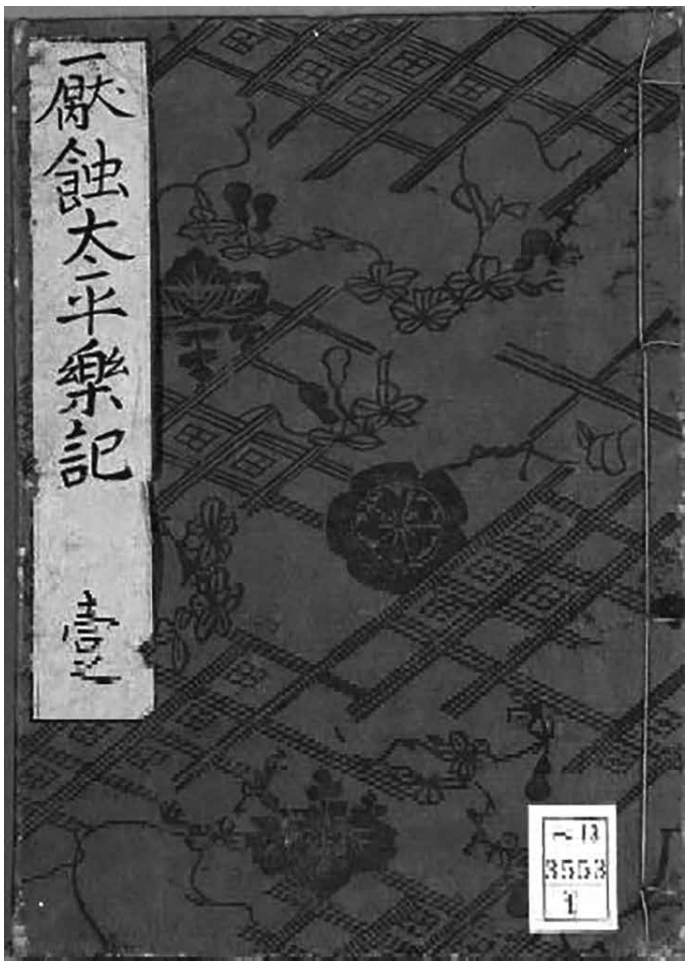
At one-point Sanada Yukimura and his father Masayuki needed to escape and flee from Ueda Castle. Sarutobi Sasuke, being an old and trusted comrade of Masayuki, remained behind to hold the enemy off and to keep them from noticing his Lords escaping and following them. Then he took care of handling the arrival of Tokugawa's messenger and handed over the castle.[71] The document is authentic, and it is a few hundred years old, predating the later *Kōdan* publications of the Meiji and Taisho periods. So there is a possibility that Sarutobi Sasuke could very well have been a real individual after all.

71 江戸の猿飛佐助、高橋圭一、地域創成研究年報第5号（2010年）、P. 2



Page from the 'Enshoku Taiheirakuki', Photo author's collection.

The *Enshoku Taiheirakuki* is a chronicle written by the Sanada family and in it Yukimura does not specifically call Sasuke a *ninja* or *shinobi*. Instead, Kirigakure Saizo (霧隠才蔵) is introduced as a *ninja* and is presented as one of Sarutobi Sasuke's closest brothers in arms. In fact, it was not until a later publication from the 1820's, called the *Honcho Seisuiki* (本朝盛衰記大全), that Sarutobi Sasuke himself was ever actually labelled specifically as a *ninja*. Previously, it had always just been insinuated by his association with Kirigakure Saizo in the *Enshoku Taiheirakuki*.



Banned hand-written publication from the 1820's called the 'Honcho Seisuiki' where Sarutobi Sasuke is first labelled specifically as a ninja. They were banned due to their anti-Tokugawa Bakufu theme. Photo from National Institute of Japanese Literature.

Conservative Japanese literature historians believe that Saizo was a fictional person only. But recent discoveries have been made by the Sanada estate and it appears highly likely that Saizo was based on the real person Kirigakure Kaemon (霧隠鹿右衛門) that is listed in another Sanada family chronical. According to the estate he is described as an Iga *ninja* and a pupil of the great Momochi Sandayu. Keep in mind that the 'Hidden Lineage' of the *Togakure ninja* clan and its sister ryū, the *Gyokko Ryū*, weaves through the Momochi family for a few generations before and after the invasion of Iga, to be discussed in the next chapter.

Sarutobi Sasuke's true origins may always remain a mystery but he certainly wasn't just a modern creation for later kōdan literature. In fact, the types of literature that we discussed about the Sanada family and Sarutobi Sasuke all fall under the category of *Jitsuroku* (実録) or 'authentic accounts'. These were a type of novel from the early modern period in Japan that also functioned as descriptions of historical events that were novelized. Real people from factual history appear in them with their real names.[72] According to researcher of Japanese literature, Mr. Takahashi Keiichi, these anti-establishment publications were banned by the Tokugawa government, so all circulated copies were hand written. Even so, they were extremely popular and today you can still find copies of them on the antiques market. [73]

72　江戸の猿飛佐助、高橋圭一、地域創成研究年報第5号（2010年）、P. 2
73　江戸の猿飛佐助、高橋圭一、地域創成研究年報第5号（2010年）、P. 2

CHAPTER

THE INVASION OF IGA

The Tenshō Iga War (**天正伊賀の乱**) is the official name of the two invasions of Iga province by Oda Nobukatsu and later his father Nobunaga in the late 1500s. At that point in history the Iga region was still considered strategically valuable as it was surrounded by mountains on all sides and could only be entered through narrow valleys and paths. This made Iga a difficult place to attack and easy to defend with only a small army. The governors of Iga for the Ashikaga shogunate never really had solid control over the area so the people of Iga led a kind of independent existence.[74] Historically the Rokkaku clan in the north and the Kitabatake clan to the east had a somewhat friendly relationship with Iga. Eventually Iga came to be ruled by '*The 12 households of the Iga Republic*', a league of local warrior clans that loosely banded together to defend the area's independence. By the middle of the 1500s the warriors of Iga had unified and were known as the '*Self-governing League of the Commons of Iga*' (**伊賀惣国一揆**).

74 "Autonomy and War in the Sixteenth-Century Iga Region and the Birth of the Ninja Phenomenon", in *War and State Building in Medieval Japan*, edited by John A. Ferejohn and Frances McCall Rosenbluth, Souyri, Pierre, Stanford University Press, 2010, P. 113~4, 117

The 12 Households of the Iga Republic (伊賀惣国一揆)

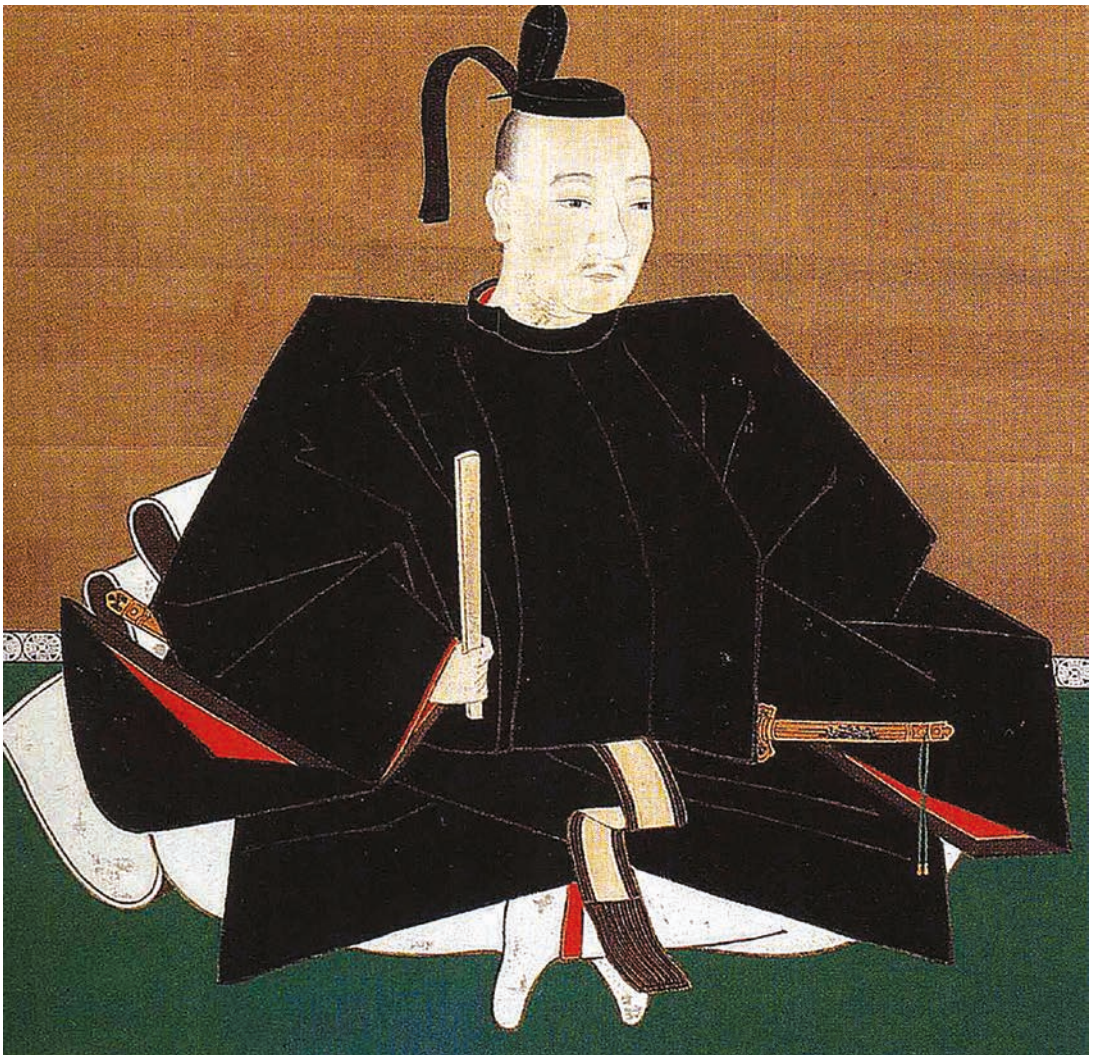
Region Name	Leader Name
長田 Nagata	百田籐兵衛 Momota Toubei
朝屋 Asaya	福喜多将監 Fukukita Shoukan
木興 Kikou	町井左馬充貞信 Machii Samanosuke Sadanobu
河合 Kawai	田屋掃部介 Taya Kamonosuke
音羽 Otowa	音羽半六 Otowa Hanroku
島ヶ原 Shimagahara	富岡忠兵衛 Tomioka Chubei
依那具 Inagu	小泉左京亮 Koizumi Sayonojo
比土 Hide	中林忠昭 (助左衛門) Nakabayashi Tadaaki (Sukezaemon)
布生 Funou	布生大善 Funou Daizen
柏原 Kashihara	滝野十郎吉政 Takino Jurou Yoshimasa
下阿波 Shimoawa	植田豊前光信 Ueda Buzen Mitsunobu
西之沢 Nishi no Zawa	家喜下総 Ieki Shimofusa

As part of his grand plan of unifying all of Japan, in 1567 CE Oda Nobunaga began to invade the neighboring Ise province and to attack the Kitabatake clan. Through intimidation and coercion, the Kitabatake vassals one by one switched to Nobunaga's side. To ensure peace, Kitabatake Tomofusa, the head of the Kitabatake clan adopted Oda Nobunaga's son, Nobukatsu. He would be raised as Tomofusa's heir to the province of Ise. This gave Nobunaga near full authority in Ise and any remaining Kitabatake leadership that were not subjugated were assassinated in December of 1576 CE in an event called the *Mise* Incident.[75]

Now with Nobukatsu in full control of Ise, he decided to expand his territory and invade Iga in 1579 CE. The previous year a disillusioned minor vassal from Iga betrayed his people and urged Nobukatsu to invade Iga. The traitor was upset with the status quo at home and expressed great anger at the *12 Households of the Iga Republic*'s expulsion of Niki Yubai, the Shogunate governor of Iga province. Already looking for a reason to invade Iga, this sparked Nobukatsu's decision to build a castle at Maruyama, right in the heart of Iga.[76] From this castle he would base his operations and take the whole province. The warriors of Iga, with their intelligence network of spies on the ground, found out about Nobukatsu's plan and attacked before they could complete the castle.[77] The Iga *ninja* warriors took the enemy by surprise in the middle of the day and openly attacked the fortress. They finally burned it down on November 24, 1578 CE. The survivors of Nobukatsu's forces retreated to *Tsuzumigamine* but were again defeated by the Iga *ninja* and had to fully retreat all the way back to Ise.[78]

75 織田信長家臣人名辞典、谷口克広、吉川弘文館、 1995、 P. 282 & 350
76 日本　史叢書、Vol. 61、深谷克己、『津藩』、日本　史學會、吉川弘文館、 Feb.1, 2002、P.264
77 村の歴史とくらし: 9、農蚕園芸局、日本図書センター、 2006、 P.23
78 伊乱記、菊岡如幻、1879、百地織之助著、摘翠書院、p. 3~4

Now infuriated and embarrassed, Nobukatsu decided to invade with an army and oversee the attack himself on October 6, 1579 CE. Again, the Iga *ninja* learned of Nobukatsu's plans and prepared for battle. Nobukatsu led the main attack with 8,000 men at Nagano Pass but his forces were heavily ambushed by the *ninja*.[79] The Iga *ninja* commanders skillfully used their knowledge of the geography of the region along with guerrilla warfare tactics. Nobukatsu and his men retreated while taking many casualties. Some of the other Generals were also ambushed and handled in a similar manner. One of the Oda army Generals, Tsuge Yasushige (柘植 保重), even lost his life to the Iga *ninja* sharpshooter, Ueda Mitsutsugu (植田光次).[80] It was a big disgrace for the Oda clan.



Oda Nobukatsu, Nobunaga's son

79 秘蔵の国: 伊賀路の歴史地理、 福永正三、 地人書房、 1972、 P.28
80 Wikipedia、植田光次、https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki、Accessed August 27, 2018

According to historical records Nobukatsu's men suffered thousands of casualties.[81] The failed invasion was an embarrassment. Furthermore, Nobukatsu had not consulted with his father, Nobunaga, before the invasion.[82] It is said that Nobukatsu wanted to impress his father by conquering Iga on his own and add it to the Oda Clan domains. When Nobunaga found out he became furious and threatened to have Nobukatsu exiled.[83]

Shortly thereafter, Iga was again betrayed by two unknown traitors from Iga. They went to Nobunaga and offered him extremely valuable information on the geography of the region and secret paths leading into the heart of Iga. Nobunaga accepted their offer and on September 30, 1581, he launched a second much larger invasion of Iga.[84] This time Oda Nobunaga assembled a massive army compared to the forces of Iga and attacked the region from six directions at once. His armies took their position as follows:

- 10,000 men - Nobukatsu and Tsuda Nobusumi's army attacking from Ise
- 12,000 men - Niwa Nagahide and Takigawa Kazumasu's army attacking from Tsuge
- 7,000 men - Gamō Ujisato and Wakisaka Yasuharu's army attacking from Tamataki
- 3,700 men - Tsutsui Junkei's army attacking from Kasama
- 7,000 men - Asano Nagamasa's army attacking from Hase
- 2,300 men - Hori Hidemasa's army attacking from Tarao

The Iga army was scattered throughout the province and totaled less than 9,000 men versus Oda's army of nearly 42,000. When the Oda forces attacked the castles and mountain strongholds of Iga they were met with little resistance as many had chosen to run away before the invasion started. The only real resistance was at the sieges of Hijiyama Castle in the north and Kashihara Castle in the south. These two castles had become the gathering points for the remaining Iga forces.

A portrait of Oda Nobunaga, the invader of Iga, believed to be painted by Giovanni Nicolao, a Jesuit traveler to Japan, probably commissioned by Oda himself. Made sometime between 1583 and 1590 CE, this photographic copy is kept in the archives of the Sanpoji Temple in Yamagata Prefecture.

81 伊乱記、菊岡如幻、1879、百地織之助著、摘翠書院、p. 7~9

82 伊賀町史、伊賀町役場、伊賀町役場、1979、P.233

83 三重県の歴史、三重県高等学校社会科研究会編、山川出版、1975、P.103

84 伊乱記、菊岡如幻、1879、百地織之助著、摘翠書院、Vol. 3、 P. 6

They battled hard at Hijiyama Castle but in the middle of the night the *ninja* escaped, possibly through a tunnel. They made it to Kashihara Castle to support Momochi Tanba and his men in the south. There again at night many of the *ninja* leaders escaped and on October 8, the remaining few at the castle surrendered and the independent rule of Iga by the people of Iga came to an end.[85]

Map of Kashihara Castle ruins at Katte Shrine in Nabari, Iga.

So where were the *Togakure Ryū* during the Invasion of Iga by Oda Nobunaga? Right in the middle of it all...

This unbelievably vicious invasion, even by today's standards, decimated the Iga and Koga *ninja* clans. Many fled but very few survived. Those that came back later went into the service of Tōdō Takatora, the lord of Iga for Toyotomi Hideyoshi and then later Tokugawa Ieyasu. To give an idea of the hatred that the people of Iga had for Nobunaga, in the first days of the invasion the general demanded he be brought a minimum of a several hundred heads per day for examination. It didn't matter if they were men, women or children.[86] To this day, more than 430 years later, the people of southern Iga still carry a particularly negative attitude towards Oda Nobunaga.

85 伊乱記、菊岡如幻、1879、百地織之助著、摘翠書院、Vol. 5, p. 8, Vol. 7, p. 6-7

86 Ninja Attack! True Tales of Assassins, Samurai, and Outlaws、Hiroko Yoda & Matt Alt、Tuttle Publishing、 2013、p. 85

While in general the family name Toda is a common one, it was not commonly found in the region of Iga in the middle ages. In fact, in the *Iranki*, the historical chronical of Oda's invasion of Iga that lists all the participating Iga leaders, there is only one mention of a Toda family member, a warrior named Toda Zairoku, a young *ninja* that fought for Momota Toubei, the leader of the Nagata District of Iga.[87] As the leadership of the *Togakure Ryū* passed from the Toda family into the Momochi family before the invasion and then back to the Toda family after it was over, and there is no other Toda family listed in the Iranki, I confidently speculate that this Toda Zairoku is an ancestor of Toda Shinryuken, the 32nd headmaster of the *Togakure Ryū*. In addition, it is interesting that Zairoku's home was only a few miles from several Togakushi satellite shrines on the border of Nara and Iga. I think this speaks for itself.

Currently I am investigating the possibility that Momota Toubei could be a secret alternate identity for the Iga *ninja* General, Momochi Tanba, or possibly one of his relatives. This is due to the importance given to him as a major political figure in the independent state's form of government called the *12 Households of the Iga Republic* and as the leading military general of the *7 Spears Army* at the Battle of Hijiyama. He led many warriors from several small *ninja* castles that had retreated to his castle at Hijiyama. They fought hard together against Nobunaga's men until finally retreating with Momota in the middle of the night to Kashihara Castle. The few that made it out alive but did not go to Kashihara castle fled into the regions that were welcoming refugees from Iga.

The Seven Spears of Hijiyama (比自山　七本槍)

Region	Name	Leader Name	
長田	Nagata	百田籐兵衛	Momota Toubei
長田	Nagata	横山甚介師尚	Yokoyama Jinsuke Moronao
木興	Kikou	町井清兵衛	Machii Seibei
木興	Kikou	新八右衛門	Shinpachiemon
木興	Kikou	森四郎左衛門	Mori Shirozaemon
朝屋	Asaya	福喜多将監	Fukukita Shoukan
上庄	Kamisho	村田勘四郎	Murata Kanshiro

Toda Zairoku is recorded as having fought bravely at the battle of Hijiyama before being forced to retreat together with his lord, Momota Toubei, to the last remaining Iga *ninja* fortress at Kashihara. As mentioned above, the final night, before the surrender of the castle to Oda Nobunaga's men, many of the upper level Iga warriors escaped, possibly through a tunnel in a well before disappearing into the darkness. In my opinion, Toda Zairoku is most likely one of these escapees and so it is possible that it was he who carried the *Togakure Ryū* into the Edo Period and into the service of the Tokugawa.

87　伊乱記、百地織之助、摘翠書院、1897

One tradition says that *Togakure Ryū Iga ninja* commanders Momochi Tanba and Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami (*Togakure Ryū ninja* who taught Yamamoto Kansuke) disappeared from the fortress at Kashihara and escaped together.[88] They were possibly protected by the Kishū-Negoro *shugenja* for a period and then made their way to safety and settled for a while in the region. Momochi is considered to have possibly taught the Negoro (根来衆) and Saika (雑賀衆) forces *ninjutsu* as many refugees of Iga came to live in Negoro and Saika.[89] These new troops became known as the *Kishū Ryū* (紀州流). According to the oral history of the *Togakure Ryū*, part of the *Iga-Togakure* leadership and responsibility goes from the Momochi family to the Nattori family of the Kishū domain and they added it to their own family martial arts.[90] From this time onward remnants of the *Iga Ryū* and the Toda lineage of the *Togakure Ryū ninja* would serve the new Tokugawa Shogunate.

Lineage of *ninjutsu* from the Momochi to the Toda Clan[91]

百地氏 (百地三之丞)　Momochi Clan　(Momochi Sannosuke)

野村大炊孫太夫　Nomura no Oimagodayu　(listed in the Bansenshukai)[92]

新堂小太郎　Shindo Kotaro　(listed in the Bansenshukai)

楯岡道順　Tateoka Dojun　(middle ranking *ninja* from Iga)

伊賀崎木猿　Igasaki no Kizaru　(possible son of Tateoka Dojun)

名取兵内　Natori Heinai

名取兵右衛門　Natori Hyoeimon

名取青竜軒　Natori Seiryu Ken　(wrote the Shoninki *ninja* manual)

丹波遠心　Tanba Enshin

戸田盛柳信綱　Toda Seiryu Nobutsuna　(Togakure Ryū)

88　戦国武将列伝、accessed April 30th 2019、https://senjp.com/momochi/
89　忍術: その歴史と忍者、奥瀬平七郎、人物往来社、1967、P. 204
90　武芸流派大事典、　綿谷雪、人物往來社、1978 Edition、 P. 627~8
91　武芸流派大辞典、XXXX、P.　XXX
92　Bansenshukai (萬川集海) an Edo Period manuscript describing *ninjutsu* methods from the clans in the Iga and Kōga regions compiled by Fujibayashi Sabuji in 1676. Along with the Shōninki of 1681 and the Ninpiden of 1655 it is one of three major sources of direct information available about *ninjutsu*.

氏郷との手詰の勝負をせんと志し、馳せ向ひて、鎬を削り戰ひしが多勢の中に取りこめられ、遁るべき方便なくして、荒神塚の邊に於て、多く敵をも討ち取り、已も終に戰死を遂げたりけり」

比自山大門の合戰

觀音堂大門は、坂の中途に修造して、高欄玉を磨きて峠ち、奇羅天に輝き、金剛力士の二尊は、高門の左右に安立し、惡魔降伏の躰相を顯はしたり、されば此の大門は、比自山の大手口なり、さて此の時口の大將は、百田藤兵衛、山田勘四郎、小澤智仙、吉住市平、富岡氏、向井氏、其の外與力の輩なは、楯岡村の大井平六、長田の住士戸田才六、横山甚助を始め、一郷の勇士百姓等に至る迄其の主從の好を思ひ死をも顧みずして之に一味せり、且此の手に加はる諸郷の勢には、木興小田両郷及び西村東村西山上野長田村を驅り交へ、彼是七个郷の兵士

Edo period map, with south to the top, as is custom with old Japanese maps, showing the location of the cluster of Togakushi shrines (red circle) in relation to where Toda Zairoku hailed from in Nagata Village (purple circle). They are approximately 9 miles to the west as the crow flies. Many of the small villages in between have confirmed and documented historical ninjutsu related activity. Iga Ueno castle, is at the bottom left corner.

CHAPTER 6

THE NINJA MOVE TO EDO

Soon after Oda Nobunaga completed his invasion of Iga he was unexpectedly killed in 1582 CE by his own retainer Akechi Mitsuhide. The rebellion against him took place at the temple known as Honnō-ji.[93] A few years after his death, one of Oda's top retainers, Tokugawa Ieyasu, carried the torch for Oda and completed his grand plan of unifying the whole of Japan in 1603 CE. This was the beginning of a new government, the

Akechi Mitsuhide, Oda Nobunaga's betrayer

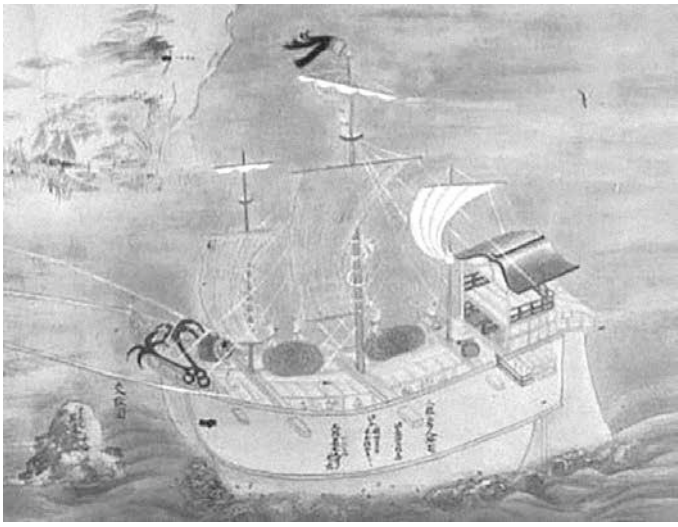
Tokugawa Shogunate (徳川幕府). [94]
But to do this, first Ieyasu needed to survive the aftermath and anarchy that came immediately following Nobunaga's death. At the time Ieyasu had been invited by Nobunaga for sightseeing in

93 高校日本史、石井進、学研教育出版、1995、P. 78
94 Handbook to Life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan、William E. Deal、Oxford University Press、2007、 P. 47

Sakai in the domain of Izumi. When he heard of Nobunaga's death from a wealthy Kyoto merchant named Chaya Shirōjirō Kiyonobu (茶屋四郎次郎清延) he decided to return to his home castle in Mikawa via the shortest route possible.[95] This would take him through the heart of Iga. He planned to go from Izumi to Koga and then through the mountains of Iga to Ise on the coast. From there he would return to Mikawa by sea following the coastline. The biggest difficulty of this journey for Ieyasu was going to be Iga.[96] The home of the *ninja* that his previous ally, Lord Nobunaga, had decimated just two years before.

What I find interesting is that while Hattori Hanzo and the *ninja* of Iga and Koga are conventionally given credit for Ieyasu's rescue, in fact it was the above mentioned Kiyonobu who took the lead.[97] Chaya Shirōjirō Kiyonobu (1545-1596 CE), was the son of a *ronin* (浪人) or master-less warrior from the Nakajima family who was crippled in a battle during the warring states period. As his father could no longer serve as a warrior for a new lord he moved to Kyoto to become a merchant. This Nakajima family were samurai vassals to the Ogasawara, a ruling clan in Shinano, again near Togakushi Mountain.[98] After being adopted into the Chaya family, Kiyonobu became a textiles merchant and started a business in Kyoto. Over time he secured a business relationship with Matsudaira Hirotada, Tokugawa Ieyasu's father. Through this connection Kiyonobu became a major supplier of textiles and high-volume military supplies to the Tokugawa family.[99] This made him very wealthy in a relatively short period of time.

Kiyonobu served Ieyasu in all his major battles from 1572-1590 CE, including Mikatagahara and Odawara.[100] He also acted in a capacity that was very similar to what we now today call the role of a *ninja*. Specifically he acted as an intelligence agent for the Matsudaira (Tokugawa) family based out of Kyoto. From the time of Oda Nobunaga's death until the beginning of the 1600's when Toyotomi Hideyoshi held power, Kiyonobu would secretly carry military communications and supplies for Ieyasu. [101]



Chaya's trading boats would proudly hang their red-seal license allowing them to trade with Vietnam. From 茶屋船交趾渡航貿易絵巻（情妙寺蔵）

95 戦国武将・あの人の「その後」:「関ヶ原」「本能寺」.....事件が変えた男たちの運命、日本博学倶楽部、 PHP研究所、 2002、 P. 28

96 戦国なるほど人物事典: 100人のエピソードで歴史の流れがよくわかる、泉秀樹、PHP研究所、2003、 P. 51

97 戦国なるほど人物事典: 100人のエピソードで歴史の流れがよくわかる、泉秀樹、PHP研究所、2003

98 プレジデント、 Volume 30、 Issues 5-8、プレジデント社、 1992、 P. 159

99 A History of Japan, 1615-1867、Sir George Bailey Sansom、Stanford University Press、1958、P. 11

100 朱印船と南海雄飛、Volume 5 of Zusetsu jinbutsu umi no Nihon shi、 第二アートセンター、日新聞社、 1978、 P. 16

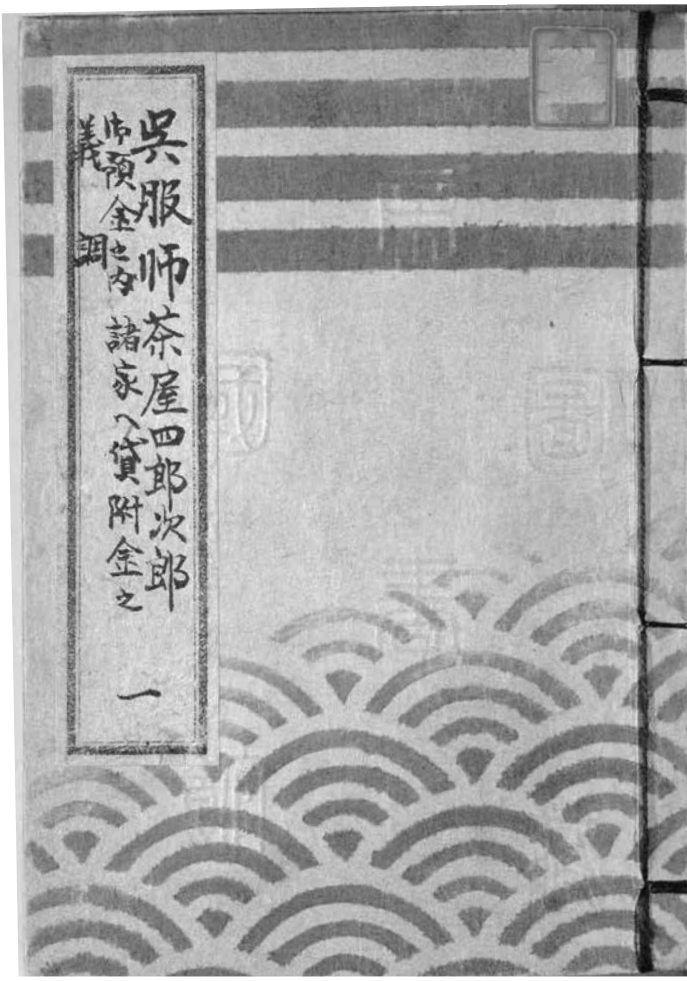
101 屋四郎次郎 伊賀を駆ける、諏訪宗篤、朝日新聞出版、2018

Toyotomi Hideyoshi's expensive invasions of Korea with the aim of taking China are what led to his decline. Photo author's collection.

Skillfully hiding his support for the Matsudaira family, he was given a special 'red-seal license' from Hideyoshi, allowing him to trade with southern Vietnam for silk and other goods.[102] So, it is due to his role as an intelligence officer for the Matsudaira family that he was able to hear the news of Oda Nobunaga's death and race to inform Ieyasu before Hideyoshi could get to Kyoto. This allowed him time to escape Akechi Mitsuhide and Hideyoshi's armies, who quickly took control of most of Japan. Due to a series of unwise political decisions, by the year 1600 CE Hideyoshi had depleted most of his government's gold on invasions of Korea with the eventual goal of taking control of China, causing his allies to lose confidence in him and eventually militarily lose to the rising powerhouse, Tokugawa Ieyasu.

After Ieyasu moved to his new territories in Edo the aging Kiyonobu helped with the planning and design of the new city. For loyally serving Ieyasu for so long the Tokugawa Shogunate repeatedly offered him formal posts as governor of various domains but he always refused. Although he was born into the *bushi* or warrior class he felt that he was not a soldier and was not interested in becoming one either.[103]

A final interesting tidbit about the Chaya family; In 1607 CE Kiyonobu's second son Kiyotsugu was assigned by Ieyasu's Shogunate to be the administrator of the port in Nagasaki, the only place where the Japanese could still carry on trade with foreigners. Here his true mission was to keep a watchful eye on the foreigners and Christian converts.[104] Although never called *ninja* per say, I find it fascinating that this clan were one of the most *ninja*-like families at the closing of the warring states period and for some time into the early Edo period. Without the Chaya family Hattori Hanzo, whom we are about to discuss, would never have had the opportunity to gain so much fame and fortune.



A record of Chaya's loans of money to various houses. It appears he may have even been acting as a bank. Photo: Japan National Library Digital Collections

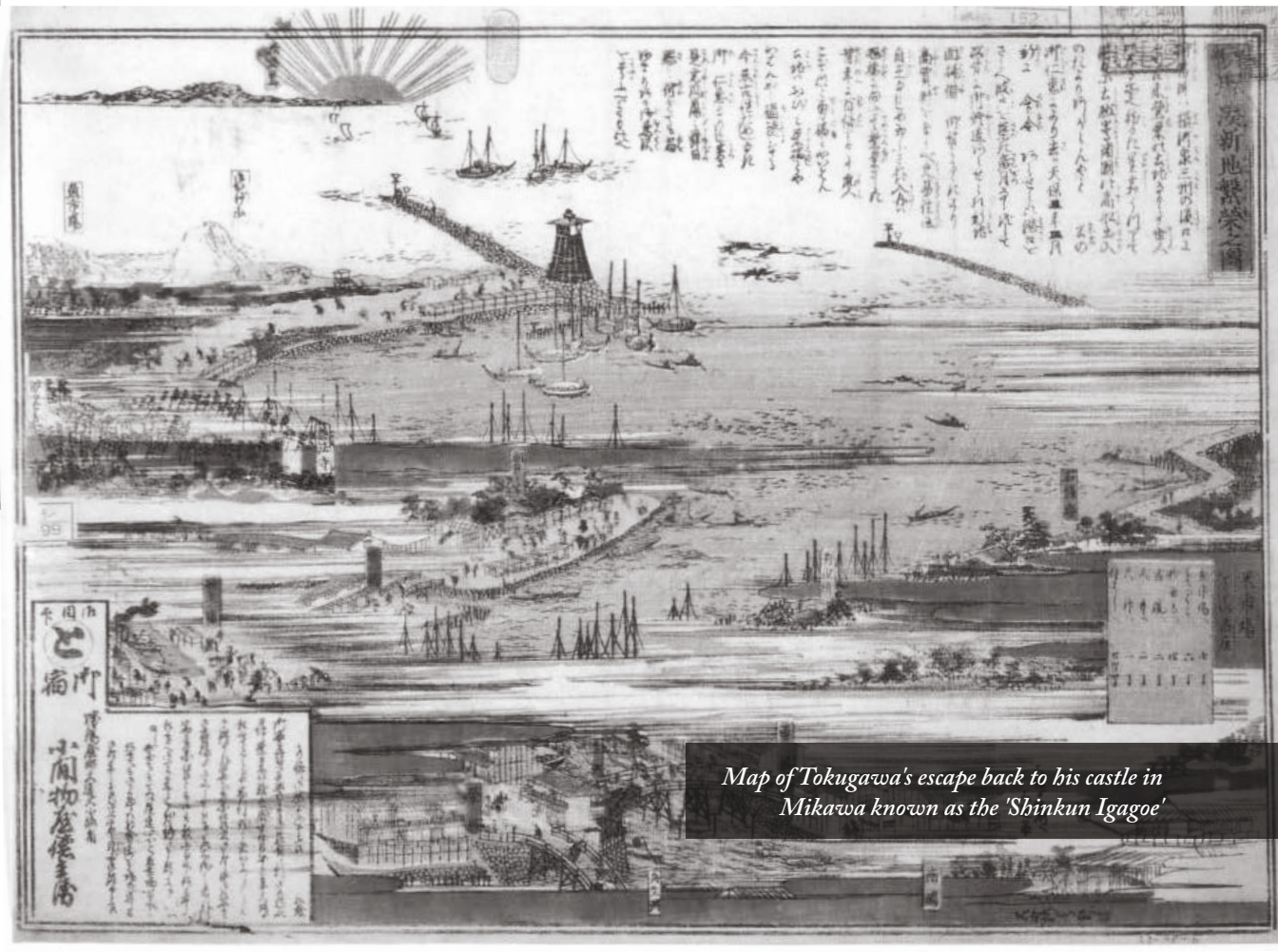
During his unexpected journey back to his castle in Mikawa, Ieyasu was attacked several times by rioting monks, civilians and local warriors looking to take power away from the ruling samurai class. Protecting him were two

102 謙信びいき、 火坂雅志、PHP研究所、2009
103 A History of Japan 1615-1867、Sir George Bailey Sansom、Stanford University、1958、 P. 11
104 近世対外関係史の研究、中田易直、吉川弘文館、 1984、P. 134

hundred Iga and one hundred Koga warriors led by Hattori Hanzo Masanari.[105] A *bushi* or samurai whose father, Hattori Yasunaga, was an Iga *shinobi* unit commander, Hattori Hanzo had served the Matsudaira family and Ieyasu several times before in the past.[106] Until this point in time in the history of the Iga and Koga *ninja*, no one daimyo lord had ever commanded a unit of *ninja* warriors in these large numbers. Hattori Hanzo had succeeded in forming the largest *ninja*-only force in history.[107]

According to the *Tokugawa Jikki* (徳川実記) this event was the first great tribulation of Tokugawa Ieyasu's life. His escape back to his castle in Mikawa became known as the '*Shinkun Igagoe*' (神君伊賀越え) or 'The divine's pass through Iga'. This was truly a time when Ieyasu's life was in great danger. So, as a reward for their success in assisting him on his dangerous journey, he offered the warriors of Iga and Koga permanent and stable positions as personal security guards, sharpshooters and escorts for the Tokugawa clan.[108] Hattori Hanzo, seeing this as an opportunity for himself and his men to ascend in position in a new social structure accepted, changing the role and the art of *ninjutsu* forever. Now, no longer limited to living in the shadows of remote mountain ranges, the *ninja* would also live and work in the new capital on the Kanto plain – Edo, known today as Tokyo.

105 戦国史談、桑田忠親、潮出版社、1980、P. 59
106 服部半蔵と影の一族、 橋場日月、 学習研究社、 2006、 From the introduction
107 戦国武将「できる男」の意外な結末(愛蔵版)、 日本博学倶楽部、 研究所、 2007、 P. 58
108 江戸御府内八十八ヶ所東京お遍路大江戸めぐり、 林えり子、 主婦の友社、 2011、 P. 123



Map of Tokugawa's escape back to his castle in Mikawa known as the 'Shinkun Igagoe'

In Edo these men formed a new elite unit called the '*Hyakuningumi*' (百人組み) comprised of the *Iga-gumi Doshin* (伊賀組同心), *Koga-gumi Doshin* (古賀組同心), *Negoro-gumi Doshin* (根来組同心) and the *Nijyugoki-gumi* (二十五騎組).[109] These new positions provided the Iga and Koga *ninja* families with a secure future in Edo. The initial set of new residences for the *Iga-gumi Doshin* units were located in the capital just outside of the castle's west gate in the Yotsuya district. In a huge show of appreciation, the west gate itself was renamed 'Hanzomon' or 'Hanzo's gate' after their leader, Hattori Hanzo Masanari, a name it still bears today. The *ninja* of Iga and Koga were beginning to adapt their arts and skill sets to match the changing times. Under the new Tokugawa government, Japan evolved from a land of various warring states into one of unity, peace and prosperity. Slowly as time passed the various *daimyo* of the domains who were at odds with each other and needed the clandestine services of the *shinobi* or *ninja* were, for the most part, removed from power or united through marriages with the Shogun's family and hence there were no more wars to fight.

The lords no longer needed *ninja* to blow up the gates of castles, dig tunnels under castle walls or perform commando raids. However there was still a role to be played in gathering information through various *shinobi* methods of investigative techniques and espionage. Simply stated, the various old styles of *ninjutsu* were no longer useful in their old forms. They needed to evolve and adapt for their profession to survive in a time of peace.[110] Later, many of the other surviving Iga and Koga *ninja* also moved to the capital to take on jobs like castle guards, secret agents and sharpshooters.

109 忍の里の記録、 石川 正知、 1982、 P. 104
110 歴史読本、Volume 53、Issue 8、新人物往来社、2008、P. 36

Hanzomon or Hanzo's gate in the Edo Period, so named for the services that Hattori Hanzo performed during Ieyasu's Shinkun Igagoe escape.

According to the *Togakure Ryū* scroll that Takamatsu wrote for Hatsumi Sensei,[111] after loyally fighting to the bitter end at Kashihara Castle during Nobunaga's invasion of Iga, the *Togakure ninja* escaped and made their way into Mikawa and the Kishū domain. As the Matsudaira clan in Kishū was known to employ Iga *Ninja* since old times, here they found a refuge and came to serve the Matsudaira family at Mikawa in the Kishū domain.

Previously, in 1563 CE, Toda-Matsudaira clan samurai and *Suwa-Ryū Takajo* (*Suwa* style master falconer) Toda Katsunori (**戸田勝則**) came to serve Tokugawa Ieyasu in Mikawa.[112] Katsunori was approximately 45 years old when Oda Nobunaga's son first invaded Iga. A few years later when Oda Nobunaga himself invaded to make up for his son's failure, Katsunori would have most likely been involved with taking in refugee warriors fleeing from Iga. I state this for a few reasons: firstly Katsunori was a falconer and falconers have traditionally been associated with secret spy groups and underground networks in Japan since the early Kamakura Period.[113] Secondly the *Suwa-Ryū* of falconry, which the Toda family practiced, comes from the Suwa region and heavily influenced the practice of falconry at Togakushi Mountain. Katsunori, being one of Ieyasu's right hand military men, likely already had connections with the *ninja* of Iga since Hattori Yasunaga and his son Masanari had served Ieyasu and the Mikawa domain before the invasion of Iga.[114]

The falconry traditions of *Suwa-Ryū* were especially secret. Evidence for this can be found in the manuals that the Toda family master falconers have left behind. They are mysterious documents written in a very secretive form, some parts are still undecipherable. It is a fact that several Iga *ninja* clans other than the Toda came from families with a rich history and tradition of *Suwa-Ryū* falconry in their blood such as the Hattori clan, the Nezu clan and the Mamiya clan just to name a few.

Katsunori was the son of Toda Mitsutada (**戸田光忠**), an upper-class samurai from the second-generation of the Toda-Matsudaira family of the Mikawa domain, the same family as the Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu. Born in 1534 CE, Katsunori was very close to Ieyasu and is recorded as being fierce in battle. At Tawara Castle in 1564 CE he and his brother were ambushed by assassins that were lying in wait for them in the shadows of a castle warehouse. Katsunori killed four of the men by himself, saving his older brother and gaining great honor. The descendants of Toda Katsunori served the Tokugawa Shogunate in various capacities for 260 years until the end of the Shogunate in the late 1860's. They served as falconers, oniwaban palace guards, onmitsu 'secret police' agents, sharpshooters, assassins and even Shogunate sword instructors.

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111 Togakure Ryu Makimono, collection of Hatsumi Masaaki

112 日本史諸家系図人名辞典、 小和田哲男・菅原正子・仁藤敦史、 講談社、 2003、 P. 447

113 図解戦国合戦がよくわかる本: 武具・組織・戦術から論功行賞まで、二木謙一、PHP研究所、 2013、 P. 205

114 忍の里の記録、Masatoshi Ishikawa、1982、P. 161

Mysterious, at times undecipherable, falconry manual from Matsumoto Castle where the Toda family were lords and master falconers for many generations. Photo courtesy of Alex Esteve

Historically speaking, many schools of *ninjutsu* did not survive the change from a world of constant war to the more peaceful Edo period (1603-1867 CE). The few that did survive, like the *Togakure Ryū*, did so by changing with the times, preserving the essence and teachings of their *ninjutsu* in the form of martial arts or *taijutsu*. With this 'essence of *ninjutsu*' as their base, the warriors of the *Togakure Ryū* became the new breed of gunnery soldiers, government spies and Shogunate enforcers. Many of the Toda family members descending from Toda Katsunori became intelligence operatives for the Shogun in a secret agency called the *Kogi-Onmitsu* (公儀隠密) and earned silent prestige.

Although a member of the Tokugawa (Matsudaira) family always held the position of Shogun during the Edo period, they were simply a *daimyo* family that ruled in the name of the emperor. That means it was possible that at any time another powerful *daimyo* could defeat the Tokugawa with military force and take over. This was a major concern for the Tokugawa Shoguns so the less power the other daimyo had the better off the Tokugawa family would remain.

For that reason, the shogunate established the above mentioned *Kogi-Onmitsu* to spy on the other *daimyo* and covertly gather information that could be useful to them.[115] Due to the secrecy of the group throughout its entire history the numbers of its members are unclear but based on the research I have done, it averages at about 10 agents per domain with an unknown number in the capital of Edo itself. This puts it at around 2,700 spies at its peak. In the early Edo period *shinobi* and *onmitsu* were classified as the same position. But as time went on and the period gets closer to modern times the *shinobi* lost some status and were no longer the same level and position as the *onmitsu*.[116] According to Japanese historian Takahashi Shinichi (a.k.a. Waka Moritaro), after the invasion of Iga the region later fell under the close eye and control of the Tōdō clan and the Tokugawa Shogunate. Slowly, over time, the *Iganomono* or *shinobi* became supplementary personnel to the *onmitsu* organization.[117]

The biggest difference between the Iga and Koga *ninja* of fame and the new *Kogi-Onmitsu* agents is that the latter usually did not need to resort to physical techniques of warfare and violence as the *ninja* often did. Rather the *Kogi-Onmitsu* mainly used methods of disguise, information gathering and espionage to succeed in their goals. The effectiveness of the *Kogi-Onmitsu* further decreased the demand for the guerilla warfare style techniques of the Iga and Koga *ninja* during the Edo period by stabilizing the Shogun's position and his ability to keep the peace in the country. While the goal of the *Kogi-Onmitsu* was mainly to protect the city of Edo and to observe the intentions of the other daimyo, there were still other types of *ninja* in existence in the Edo period.

One type of unconventional warrior of the Edo Period that falls under the modern and generally accepted definition of the term *ninja* were the *kusa* (草).[118] *Kusa* is the Japanese word for grass and these spies were given this name because they were 'planted like grass'. They set their roots and lived in the enemy's territory and in this way the Shogun could ensure that he always had spies already on the ground whenever he needed them. As was common for the *kusa*, once they took a mission, there was a very high chance of them never going back to their previous lives. Naturally, some would have brought their families with them to their post and due to the nature of some of these assignments, the children and grandchildren of these *kusa* could never know or be aware of the *Kusa's* mission. It must have been difficult keeping such a secret from your own family.

Both *Kogi-Onmitsu* agents and *Kusa* were often assigned to missions that involved living in places far from the capital in Edo. In most situations they maintained regular jobs at the places they were sent to. There are two main reasons for this. Of course, one was to avoid causing suspicion amongst local people. The other was to collect useful information through that job. For example, they often disguised themselves as farmers, message carriers, merchants and sailors. Disguising oneself as a farmer was good for collecting the rumors of ordinary and local people but the information may not be so important and useful. In the case of a job as a sailor or merchant, they could get important information from several places with which they

115 「隠密」、松尾美恵子、『国史大辞典 2』、吉川弘文館、1980
116 隠密、Wikipedia、Accessed August 30th, 2018
117 日本歴史を探る、和歌森太郎 (Shinichi Takahashi)、河出書房新社、1963、P. 135
118 歴史と人物、Issues 10-11、中央公論社、1981、University of California. P. 45~6

were connected through that work. Then the information would have to secretly make its way back to the Shogun in Edo or their employer elsewhere in encoded form.

It is key to understand that even though the *Kogi-Onmitsu* was an organization under the direct control of the Edo Shogunate, it was not under the control of the individual Shogun himself. So, it was more beneficial for a Shogun to have his own private intelligence service. The 8th Tokugawa Shogun, Yoshimune, understood this and established the *Oniwaban-Shu* (御庭番衆).[119] This term translates as the 'Garden Unit'. It is estimated that there were around 200 members of *Oniwaban-Shu* at any given time in its heyday. Because of the misleading name many have thought that they took care of the gardens in Edo castle. But the name really represents how well trusted these men were by the Shogun. The *Oniwaban-Shu's* barracks were right in the gardens just outside of the Shogun's personal living quarters. They were free to roam throughout the entire castle grounds uninhibited and were also the only security group permitted to directly communicate with the Shogun.

Since they could freely go anywhere in the castle grounds the *Oniwaban-Shu* could observe the people within the castle walls, looking for potential spies and assassins. They could also collect the various opinions of the people living around the castle grounds, like samurai, handmaids and craftsmen. Although members of the *Oniwaban-Shu* got their orders directly from the Shogun, and the Shogun only, they did at times also run missions for the *Roju*, *wakadoshiyori* and the *metsuke* level officials.[120] They could be dispatched to the ends of the country at a moment's notice and could even investigate very high-ranking statesmen if they had permission from the Shogun. But members of the *Oniwaban* followed a strict set of regulations which in most cases forbade them from socializing with the common public. The ultra-secret *Oniwaban* organization remained in active service until the very end of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1867 CE.

119 江戸の隠密・御庭番、 清水昇、河出書房新社、2009

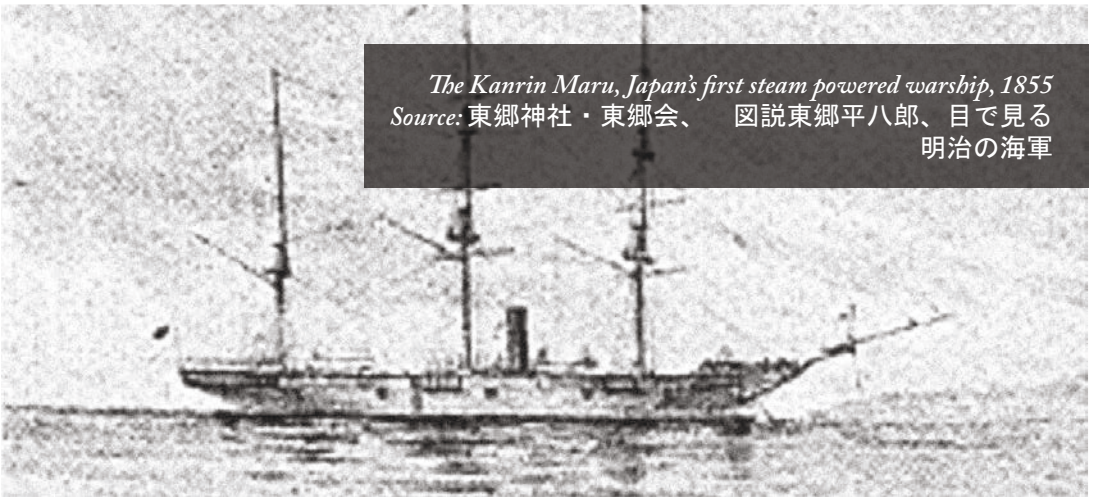
120 Monumenta Nipponica: Studies on Japanese Culture, Past and Present, Volume 55, Sophia University, 2000, P. 386

The French military mission to Japan, invited by Tokugawa Yoshinobu to modernize his forces, sometime just after creating the Oniwaban. 1866 photograph originally published in Le Monde Illustré.

Thanks to the *Oniwaban-Shu*, the ability of the Shogun and the Shogunate to keep the peace through intelligence gathering dramatically improved. The *Oniwaban-Shu* and the *Kogi-Onmitsu* would often cross check each other's investigations enabling the Shogun to get very accurate and important news information from opposite ends of Japan in a very timely manner. The Edo Shogun's ability to maintain domestic peace for 260 years was in many ways due to the skills and abilities of these new style of '*ninja*' of the Edo period.

The first Japanese Embassy to visit the United States in 1860 CE was composed of three men; Ambassador Shinmi Masaoki (新見正興), Vice-Ambassador Muragaki Norimasa (村垣範正) and Observer Oguri Tadamasa (小栗忠順). Of these three men, it is known that Muragaki's ancestors were from a family of Iga *ninja* that served the Shogun in Edo and he was also a senior member of the *Oniwaban*. He was born in Edo in 1813 CE in the area called Tsukiji. In 1831 CE, at only 19 years old he became a member of the *Oniwaban* and served on the special unit known as *Kojunin Kakuteiban* (小十人格庭番).[121] Later in 1854 CE he was selected to become a case reviewer for the innermost secret missions of the *Oniwaban* and was well trusted. He also had ready access to the Shogun's ear. In 1860 CE, at the request of the Shogun he travelled to the USA with the Japanese Ambassador Shinmi Masaoki as the Vice-Ambassador. Their mission was to sign the new *Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation* between the United States and Japan. It was also Japan's first diplomatic mission to the United States since the 1854 CE forceful opening of Japan for trade through military force by Commodore Matthew Perry. But the *Bakufu* government also had a hidden agenda in mind. This mission was the first time a modern Japanese warship, the *Kanrin Maru* (咸臨丸) was dispatched.

The iron clad *Kanrin Maru* accompanied the Ambassador's party across the Pacific Ocean and showed the Americans how far Japan had come in mastering western style navigation techniques and ship building technologies. It had only been a few years since Japan had ended its nearly 250-year isolation policy and the *Bakufu* wanted to show the West the Japanese people's incredible ability to quickly modernize in the arts and industry of war.



The Kanrin Maru, Japan's first steam powered warship, 1855
Source: 東郷神社・東郷会、　図説東郷平八郎、目で見る明治の海軍

121　明治維新人物辞典: 幕末編、　奈良本辰也、　至誠堂、 1966、 P. 230

1st Japanese Embassy to the USA in 1860
Center: Ambassador Shinmi Masaoki (新見正興)
Left: Vice-Ambassador Muragaki Norimasa (村垣範正) and
Right: Observer Oguri Tadamasa (小栗忠順)

Shibata Takenaka (柴田剛中) 1823–1877 CE, also known as Shibata Sadatarō (貞太郎) was a Japanese diplomat who at the request of the Shogun visited France in 1865 CE to help prepare Japan's first modern arsenal at Yokosuka with French technology and support. Before that he was active as the Commissioner of Foreign Affairs in the Tokugawa shogunate. His family tree has a long history of *shinobi* from Mikawa, the refuge that many *Iga/Togakure Ryū shinobi* escaped to during the invasion of Iga.

Immediately after Commodore Perry's arrival in Japan, the Shogunate relied on interpreters working from Japanese into Dutch and then into English, and vice versa. In the 1860's when Shibata came to his post, the shogunate now had a man who was comfortable in both English and French, greatly improving efficiency and communication between nations. He was the founding member of the Shogunate's international correspondence department, managed European missions and conducted diplomatic negotiations and inspections. His first journey to Europe was in 1862 CE as the head of the mission's staff for the first Japanese Embassy to Europe.

Shibata's strength was that he had an excellent ability to gather information and it is said that he had 12 undercover Onmitsu agents at his beck and call at all times. With these agents he was able to observe the activities foreigners and their ships in detail.

As Thomas Blake Glover, a Scottish merchant at the end of the Edo Period and the beginning of the Meiji Period, was supplying military arms and warships to the Imperial faction [122], Shibata and his *Onmitsu* agents engaged in espionage activities against him and his company. Among these spies were members of the '*Shibata-renchu*', a special unit of spies that travelled the whole country gathering information for the shogunate. They were the elite of the elite of the *Onmitsu* organization.

Shibata's family martial art was called *Gyoshin Ryū Heiho* (形心流兵法) and their *ninpo* was called *Musashi Ryū* (武蔵流).[123]

122 Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration、Marius B. Jansen、Princeton University Press、1961、pp. 216-17, 253-55

123 江戸の忍者 武蔵一族、Accessed May 2018、https://mixi.jp/view_community.pl?id=1530110 『武術は家伝として古くから伝わるものや集った人々の流派の秘伝、口伝を形心流として総称しています。このうち、忍術はとくに武蔵流忍法と呼びならします』

1860's photo of Shibata Takenaka and his 'Shibata-renchu' in Europe

CHAPTER 7

THE TODA AT TOBA & MATSUMOTO

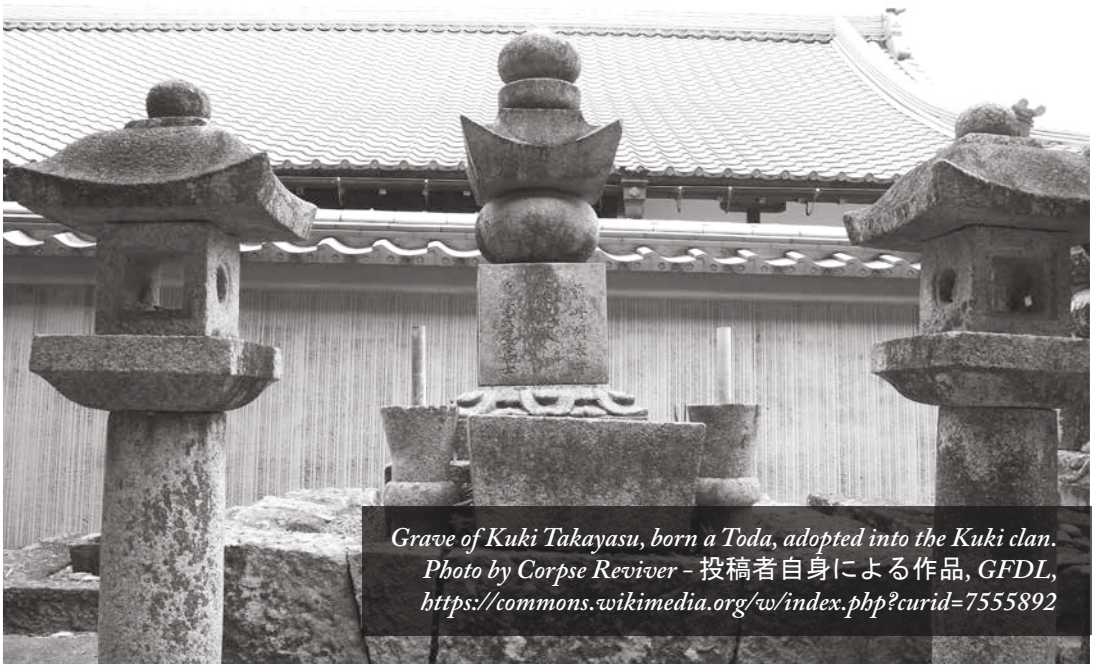
As we discussed in an earlier chapter, the Toda-Matsudaira clan were a branch of the same family that produced the Tokugawa Shoguns for over 250 years until the end of the Edo period. When Matsudaira Takechiyo became the first Tokugawa Shogun in 1603 CE he took on the name Ieyasu and thereafter only a Shogun or a direct descendant of a Shogun could use the family name Tokugawa. Being of Matsudaira blood, the Toda-Matsudaira family were afforded certain privileges and status in the social world shaped by the Tokugawa. In 1717 CE after loyally serving the Matsudaira and Tokugawa in Iga, Mikawa and Edo, members of the Toda-Matsudaira family were placed in control of the Toba domain and its castle *Toba-jō* (鳥羽城), a strategically located castle on the coast of Toba in Mie Prefecture. From *Toba-jō* it was a two-day hike or less than a day's journey by horseback to Iga Ueno castle and the domain was known to have relations with the warriors known as *Igamono* (伊賀者) or *ninja* for many generations. [124]

Old map of Toba Castle, fortress of the Kuki Pirate Navy

124 三重県史、三重県 Japan、三重県、1964、P. 175-176

The main gate faces the ocean and it was known as the 'Floating Castle of Toba' (鳥羽の浮城 *Toba-no-uki-jō*) or the 'Two-color Castle' (二色城 *Nishoku-jō*) from the fact that its seaward side was painted black, and the landward side painted white. Because the fishing industry was so important to the Toba domain for getting through the tough winters it is said that the seaward side was painted black so as not to scare away the mullet fish.[125] I personally feel that since the original castle was constructed in 1594 CE by Kuki Yoshitaka, an admiral under Toyotomi Hideyoshi who commanded a force of pirates that controlled the Ise Bay area in the Sengoku period, that it was painted black to make it more difficult to see and attack from the water. In earlier times the leaders of the Kuki clan ruled from this castle for three generations until 1633 CE, then later under the control of Naito Tadashige, the grounds were expanded by adding a second and third bailey to the original estate.

Here, at Toba, we can see the beginnings of the Toda family developing a close bond with the Kuki clan as they both served the Shogunate from this same castle. There are several intermarriages and adoptions between the two clans around this time and going forward into the Edo Period. For example, Kuki Takayasu 九鬼隆抵 (1690~1733), was the 7th generational head of the Kuki Clan. But he was born as the second son to Toda-Matsudaira Tadaaki (戸田忠章) and on June 18th, 1702 at the age of 12 years old, Takayasu, born as a Toda was officially adopted by Kuki Takahisa (九鬼隆久) the 6th Generation head of the Kuki Clan.[126] Six months later that year he made his first appearance in front of the Shogun and took over when his father retired while still only 15 years of age. He also had a daughter who married another Kuki family member, Kuki Takayori, the 8th Generation head of the Kuki Clan. Kuki (Toda) Takayasu died in 1733 at 44 years old.



Grave of Kuki Takayasu, born a Toda, adopted into the Kuki clan. Photo by Corpse Reviver - 投稿者自身による作品, GFDL, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7555892

125 海と民具、日本民具学会、雄山閣、1987、P. 104
126 日本史諸家系図人名辞典、小和田哲男＆菅原正子＆仁藤敦史、講談社、2003、 P. 260

(The above-mentioned Kuki Takayori's gravesite was located not far from my old 'university days' apartment in Tokyo, at Taiso-Ji Temple. While walking one evening with a buddy of mine we found the temple by accident. There I learned from the friendly resident monk that Kuki Takayasu held an official post of the fifth rank and was guardian of the land of Tango.)

Takayasu's real father, Toda Tadaaki, was the 5th son of Toda Tadamasa (戸田忠昌) a Japanese *daimyō* of the early Edo period. He served in a variety of positions in the Tokugawa Shogunate, including *Rōjū* and *Kyoto Shoshidai*.[127]

The Rōjū (老中) was one of the highest-ranking government posts under the Tokugawa Shogunate of Edo period Japan. The term refers either to individual elders, or to the Council of Elders. Under the first two shoguns, there were only two *Rōjū*. The number was then increased to five and later reduced to four. So this was a very powerful and prestigious position.

As *Kyoto Shoshidai* he was the shogun's deputy in the Kyoto region, and was responsible for maintaining good relations and open communication between the Shogunate and the imperial court. He was tasked with controlling the access of the *daimyō* to the court and was also appointed to oversee financial measures for the court. The position was entirely responsible for the emperor's personal security and for guarding the safety of the court. It was a serious position with lots of prestige attached. So we can see clearly now that in the 15th and 16th centuries the Shogun, the Kuki Clan, the Toda Clan and the Imperial Court all had close connections to each other. Later we will see that this was still true in the 17th century as well.

Back at Toba Castle, Toda-Matsudaira Mitsuchika (戸田松平光慈) had been lord of the domain for only eight years when in 1725 CE he was also assigned the responsibility of being lord over the Shinano Matsumoto domain in the north that included Togakushi Mountain within its borders. From Matsumoto Castle his descendants ruled the domain for the Shogun for the next nine generations. Historical documents related to Matsumoto Castle reveal that the Toda-Matsudaira family brought *shinobi* and *ninjutsu-tsukai* (忍術使い) with them from Toba castle when they settled in their new home.[128] After making it known they had *shinobi* (*ninja*) in their service, the Matsumoto domain called their style of *ninjutsu* the *Akutagawa Ryū*, after their star *ninja* Akutagawa Kurozaemon Yoshimichi (芥川九郎左衛門義道).[129]

Akutagawa and his descendants were employed at the castle by all nine generations of the Toda-Matsudaira family under the same name, Akutagawa Kurozaemon, and while most *ninja* who served in the shadows of history usually left no name or trace of themselves behind, the Akutagawa and the other *ninja* of Matsumoto castle were different. Matsumoto was a small domain during the Edo Period, but they openly advertised to the rest of the country that they employed the powerful *ninjutsu-tzukai* (忍術使い) and *yōjutsutsukai* (妖術使い) or *ninja* and magicians of the Koga Akutagawa clan, who seemed to have super-human like powers.[130]

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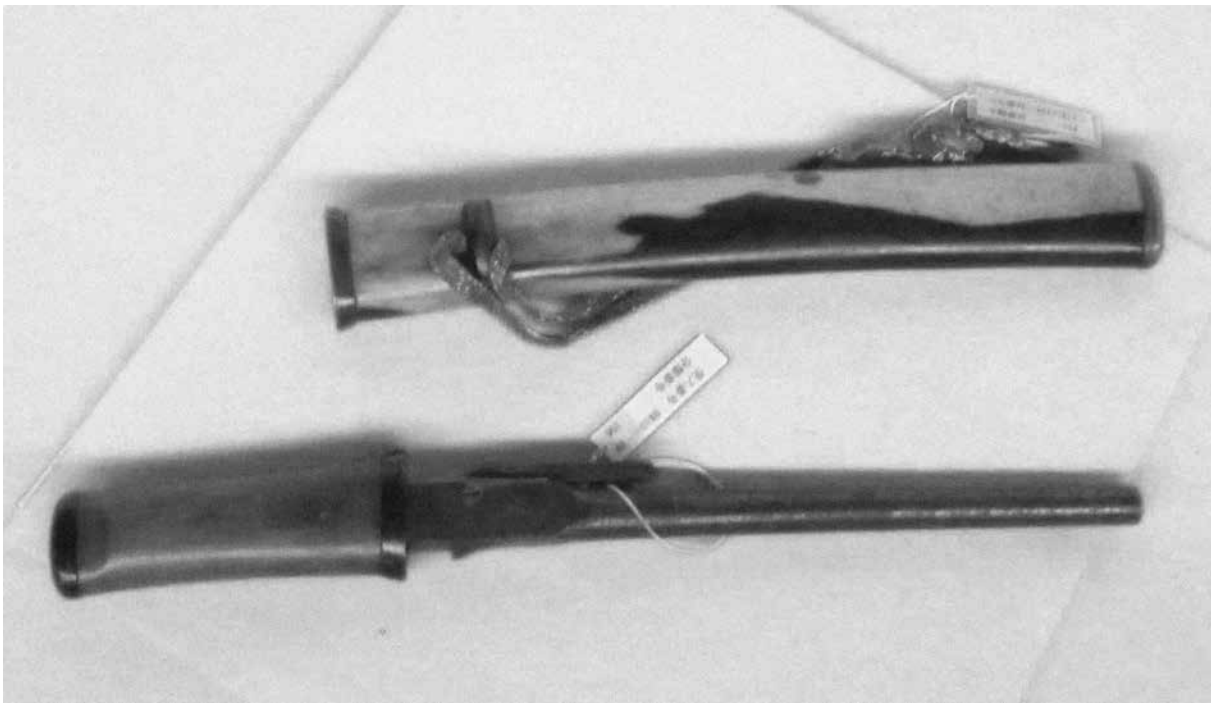
127 江　幕府職制の基礎的研究: 美和信夫教授遺稿集、美和信夫、広池学園出版部、1991、P. 170
128 江　諸藩要覧、井上隆明、東洋書院、1983、p. 129
129 歴史読本、Volume 49、Issues 7-9、新人物往来社、新人物往来社、2004、 P. 97
130 武芸流派百選、綿谷 雪、秋田書店、1972、P. 9

Matsumoto Castle near Togakushi Mountain. This castle was home to the Toda Matsudaira family for nine generations. Here the secrets of Togakure Ryū ninjutsu were passed on alongside that of Suwa-Ryū falconry. Photo courtesy of Alex Esteve.

It is said that this may have been a type of pre-emptive strategy against the neighboring clans because within the Koga *ninjutsu* tradition of the late Sengoku period there is a secret document called the *Koga Ryū Ninjutsu Hisho Ougi Den no Maki* (甲賀流忍術奥義傳之巻)(1585 CE). In it is a strategy that falls under the term '*Yonin no Jutsu*' (陽忍之術) or 'Ninpo strategies of the light' that calls for making it open and known that you excel in magic, espionage and covert warfare.[131] It is the unusual strategy of announcing to the world that you are a *shinobi*. The idea is that by doing so your neighbors will think your territory is too difficult to be penetrated by spies and give up any intentions of espionage they may have had. On the other side of the coin, when a *shinobi* was in disguise or undercover, the strategy was called '*In-nin no Jutsu*' (陰忍之術) or 'Ninpo strategies of the Dark'.[132]



Pistol disguised as a tanto short blade from the Toda family collection on display at Matsumoto Castle in Nagano. Photo courtesy of Alex Esteve

The Toda-Matsudaira clan and the Matsumoto domain were well known throughout Japan for four things:

- The *So-jutsu* (槍術) or spearman-ship of the Suganuma family
- The *Ju-jutsu* (銃術) or sharpshooting and gunnery skills of the Kuroda family
- The *I-jutsu* (医術) or medical arts of the Matsubara family
- The *In-jutsu* (陰術) or the covert techniques of *ninjutsu* of the Akutagawa family [133]

131 國學院雜誌、Volume 97、國學院大學、1996、P. 76
132 忍者と忍術、 部新十郎、 日新聞社、1996、P. 17
133 Pamphlet from the Matsumoto Castle administrative office in Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture, Japan, 2017

Because the first Akutagawa Kurozaemon, Yoshimichi, was from Koga the *ninjutsu* of Matsumoto is considered to be a part of the Koga tradition. But as the Toda family retained *Igamono* at Toba castle and brought them to Matsumoto, I personally believe the Toda family made the *Akutagawa Ryū* the 'face' of *ninjutsu* that they wanted to show to the public while in the background their family's *ninjutsu*, the *Togakure Ryū* (*Iga*), was working in silence and away from the limelight.

Yoshimichi (義道) came to serve the Toda family in 1675 CE in what is now called Gifu City in Gifu Prefecture. When the Toda family was transferred to Toba Castle near Iga he followed his Lord Toda. When they were again uprooted and sent to the castle in Matsumoto not too far from Togakushi Mountain, Akutagawa loyally stayed in service and settled in Matsumoto as well.[134] I like to believe he would have been eager to live in the land of his Koga *ninjutsu* forefathers and the Mochizuki clan that we learned about in chapter one.

According to the Matsumoto Castle research and administration office, the 4th generation Akutagawa Kurozaemon Yoshinori (芥川九郎左衛門義矩)(1732 to 1810 CE) excelled in academic studies and introduced Confucianism into the education system of the Matsumoto domain schools. In line with family tradition he excelled at techniques of *ninjutsu* and left behind many fantastic anecdotes in his name. But since the name Akutagawa Kurozaemon was in use for about 150 years it is fair to say that many of the stories and anecdotes may not be about Akutagawa Kurozaemon Yoshinori himself.

The following are the names of the 9 generations of Toda-Matsudaira family members that held the position of lord at Matsumoto Castle from 1725 CE until the end of the Edo Period in the 1860's CE.

光慈 Mitsuchika
光雄 Mitsuo
光徳 Mitsuyasu
光和 Mitsumasa
光悌 Mitsuyoshi
光行 Mitsuyuki
光年 Mitsutsura
光庸 Mitsutsune
光則 Mitsuhisa

Note that all the names begin with the character for light (光) and they are all read as '*Mitsu*'. This was a tradition within this line of the Toda-Matsudaira family. I believe this is the reason why Toda Shinryuken, the 32nd headmaster of the *Togakure Ryū's* hidden lineage, had the same character for light at the end of his *ninja* lineage name, Masa-MITSU (正光), to intentionally show his loyalties and devotion to the Toda Matsudaira clan and especially to the branch at Matsumoto Castle.

134 長野県史: 中信地方、Volume 5, Issue 1 of 長野県史: 近世史料編、長野県史刊行会、p. 219-20

Toda-Matsudaira Mitsuhisa was the last lord of the domain at the end of the Edo Period when control of Japan was turned over from the Shogunate to the Emperor. The Toda were deposed of their positions and initially quietly returned to their homelands. During a visit to Matsumoto Castle a few years ago I met with local Matsumoto historian, Mr. Kyoji Aoki. When I asked him what the Toda clan's Akutagawa *ninja* did during the Edo Period when it was so peaceful, he told me to keep in mind that the *ninja* were of the *bushi* class (**武士**), or warriors by birthright and that their daily routine would have consisted of constant studies in:

武術 – (Bujutsu) Martial Arts

兵学 – (Heigaku) Military Science

剣法 – (Kenpo) Swordsmanship

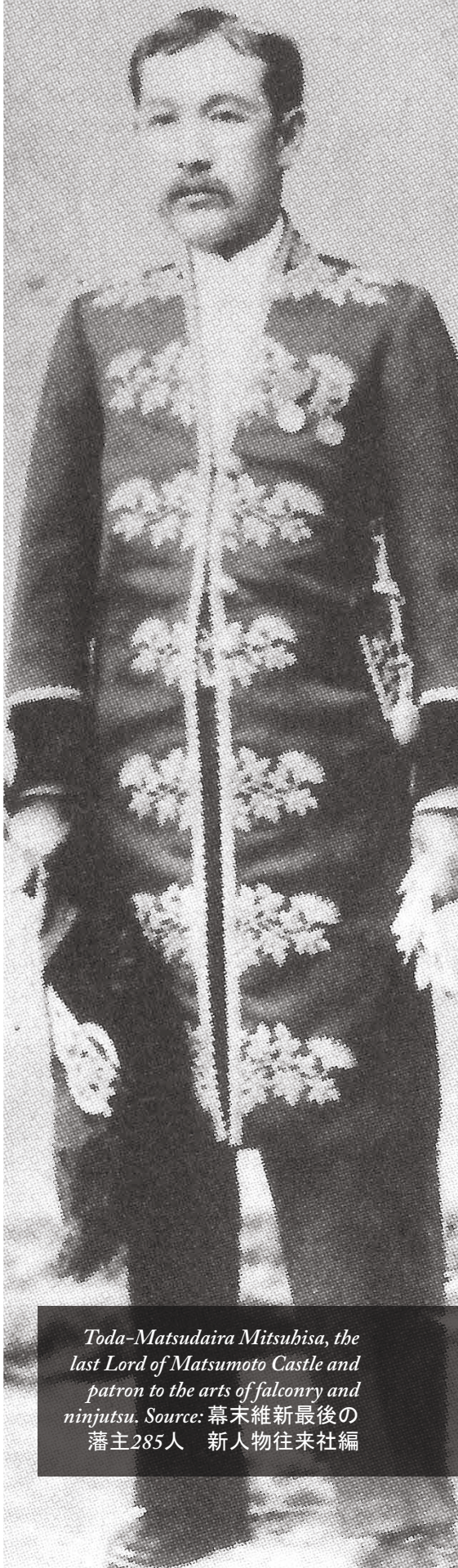
槍術 – (Sojutsu) Spear techniques

馬術 – (Bajutsu) Equestrian/Horsemanship

兵法 – (Heiho) Military Strategy

Then after mastering these things they would go on a *Shugyo no Tabi* (**修行の旅**) or a 'journey of learning', during which time they would travel from Matsumoto Castle, as far North as Hokkaido and as far South as Nagasaki in Kyushu to examine all the castles in between. There were certain key things that they would look for:

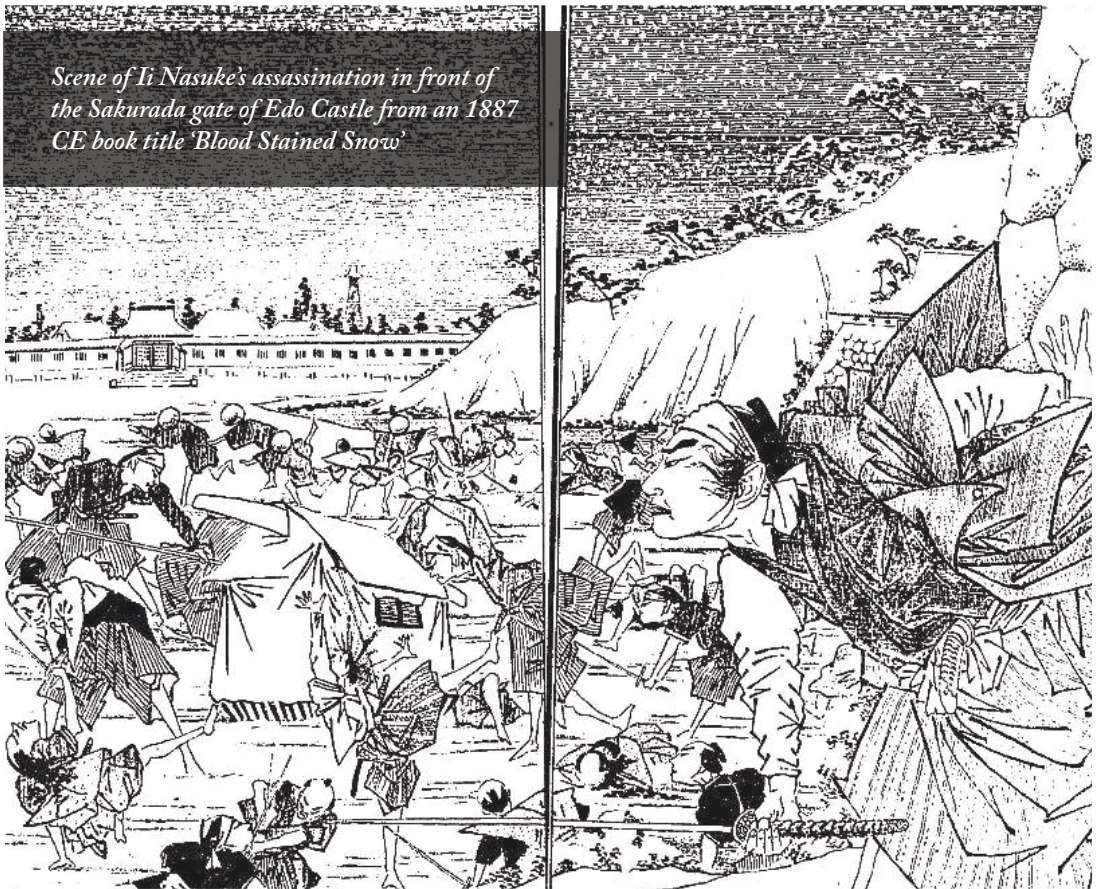
- Whether the castle is still standing solid or not?
- From which direction is it best to attack the castle?
- What kind of temperament the lord has?
- Are there any worthy vassals?
- Who are the cowardly vassals?
- How high are the castle walls?
- What are the special products/industry of the area?
- What are the townspeople like? Are they content?
- Geography of the roads



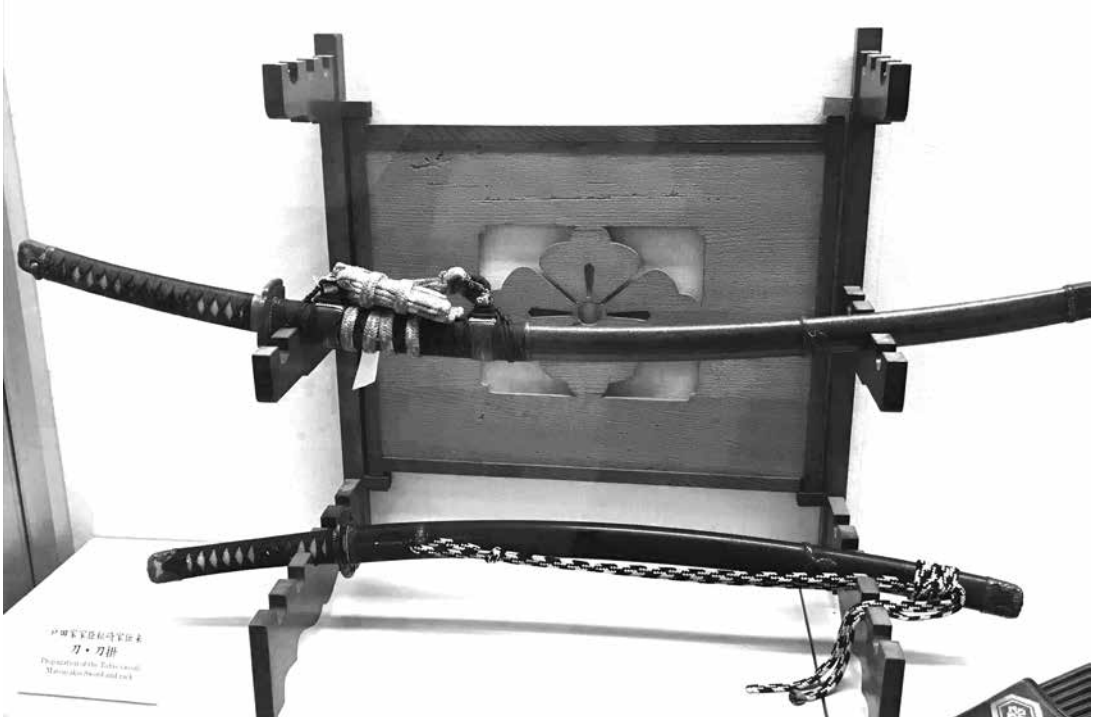
Toda-Matsudaira Mitsuhisa, the last Lord of Matsumoto Castle and patron to the arts of falconry and ninjutsu. Source: 幕末維新最後の藩主*285*人　新人物往来社編

During this journey, the Akutagawa *ninja* would investigate the politics of the clans, their economics, the ethnicity of the people, their cultures, local geography, etc. But, even more importantly they had to remember all this in their head or record it in a code that others could not understand. This, he said, was the life of the Akutagawa and the other *ninja* that served the Toda family. Mr. Aoki also commented that Matsumoto Castle research has produced many recent discoveries including documents that recorded a few of the secrets made during some of these 'journeys of learning'.

One example he discussed in depth regards the infamous 'Sakuradamon Incident'. This concerned the assassination of Japanese Chief Minister, Ii Naosuke, on the 24th of March 1860 CE in front of the Sakurada gate to Edo castle. The assassins were a group of rōnin samurai of the Mito Domain who attacked Naosuke outside the gate. The Toda family sent a *ninja* to Mito in Edo on the 16th of March, just one week before the assassination. Sadly, as there were no more entries related to this topic we have no idea what the results of his investigation were. The Toda family also sent *shinobi* to infiltrate the Hikone region to gather information. At the time of the conquest of Choshu, the same *ninja* was used to sneak into Choshu and he investigated the condition of the area for about a month before soldiers were sent in. On another occasion, when the Battle of Aizu started, the Toda sent the Akutagawa *ninja* to decide where to set up the base camp for the attack. He did advance scouting to determine the topography of the area and based on that information the Toda commanders at Matsumoto Castle would send in their soldiers. This was an important mission. To send the large-scale samurai battalions based on Akutagawa's information meant he was well trusted and relied upon.



Scene of Ii Nasuke's assassination in front of the Sakurada gate of Edo Castle from an 1887 CE book title 'Blood Stained Snow'



Swords of the Matsuzaki samurai who served the Toda lords on display at Matsumoto Castle. Photo courtesy of Alex Esteve

According to the Matsumoto Castle administration and research office, the Akutagawa secret family documents on *ninjutsu* do not portray *ninja* or *ninjutsu* as it was in popular literature such as novels and plays. There is no turning into animals, becoming invisible or other miraculous descriptions. Rather, the Matsumoto domain *ninja* were more concerned with making contacts in various lands, sending them gifts and keeping valued connections. In this way, contacts will share information when asked or needed. To the Toda lords, this was extremely important.

But there are also some interesting things in the documents that are very stereotypically '*ninja*-like'. For example, there is a passage about '*Enmaku no Ho*' (煙幕の法) or 'the method of the smoke curtain'. This smoke screen is made by mixing powdered Japanese white birch, indigo and pine needles. This could be lit and thrown, creating a huge wall of smoke wherever it lands and burns. There was also a mixture mentioned for putting people to sleep. It consisted of a secret blend of pond snails, peppers, yams and miso. After grinding these ingredients up, they need to be formed into specific shapes and grilled until blackened. To use, they would be slowly burnt like incense and fan the odorless fumes and vapors into a room.

Within the secret techniques of the *Togakure Ryū* there is a strategy called '*Onibi no Jutsu*' (鬼火之術). in which the *ninja* dons a demon's mask and blows out flames and poisonous smoke from a bamboo tube protruding out of the mouth. The mask is for the initial shock effect but after the poisonous fumes have been inhaled by the enemy it was only a matter of time before hallucinations of devils and demons begin to set in. At Matsumoto Castle the *Akutagawa Ryū* also had a technique called '*Onibi no Jutsu*' (鬼火之術). Could it be the same as the Toda family's *Togakure Ryū* technique?. After little digging, I soon found a story about the *ninja*, Kurozaemon, describing this technique in action. It is slightly different in use from the *Togakure Ryū*, but the general idea is the same.

Oni mask from the Kamakura Period dating 1296 CE, a national treasure preserved at Hōryū-ji in Nara Prefecture. Photo author's collection.

The story goes that one day during the Edo period, there was a celebration at the Toda clan's family castle in Matsumoto. At the banquet sat the head of the Akutagawa family and master of '*In-jutsu*' (隠術) Akutagawa Kurozaemon Yoshinori. When the feast was well underway, Lord Toda leaned over the railing of his seat of honor and said down to Yoshinori: 'It is said you are a master *ninjutsu-tsukai*, but sadly I have never seen your *ninjutsu* even once. I would really like to see it.' Yoshinori responded saying that '*ninjutsu* is not a spectacle but I am in my master's home and it would be rude of me to refuse you. Alright!' Yoshinori got up and went to the center of the room. He faced his lord and then lay face down on the tatami floor. He began to close his eyes and chant an incantation and a sweet aroma began to drift into the open room.

After a little time had passed, seven of the castle's female servants who were sitting together in the room began to feel sleepy and were not able to stand even if they tried. Then the servants began covering themselves up in shame for their *koshimaki* (腰巻) had been removed and all seven women's bare white thighs were in plain view for everyone at the party to see.

Then in a flash the women's *koshimaki* began to fall from thin air in the middle of the room and land on Kurozaemon, still lying face down as the *koshimaki* completely covered him until he was no longer visible. The other retainers had all fallen deeply asleep and when they woke they remembered nothing that had happened. Kurozaemon stated to his Lord… "This is *Onibi no Jutsu* of the Akutagawa school" (これぞ芥川流の忍法「鬼火の術」).[135]

A woman of high class wearing the typical 'koshimaki' from the early Edo Period.
Source: 高野山持明院蔵「浅井長政夫人像」

135　親切日本忍びの者列伝、　竜太郎小山、 1964、 P. 125

The sweet-smelling aroma was a gas that is released when a paper ball laced with various secret ingredients was lit and burnt. The fumes floated out into the room and put the female servants and retainers into a semi unconscious state. During this time Kurozaemon removed the ladies '*koshimaki*' and put them in a pile. When the timing was right, and the ladies were coming back to consciousness he simply threw the clothing up into the air and let them land on top of him. Only Lord Toda, laughing hysterically, could see what had truly happened from his raised position of honor that sat above the level of the floating gas.

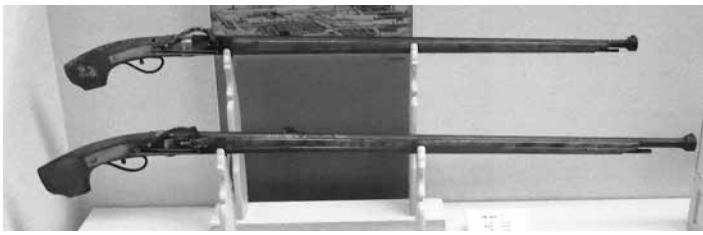
Due to the success of *Akutagawa Kurozaemon Yoshinori*, *Akutagawa Ryū Ninjutsu* became well known throughout Japan. His lord let the outside world know that Matsumoto Castle and the Toda family had *ninja* in their service. It is recorded that he was born in 1732 and that his *ninjutsu* specialty was the use of drugs and poisons. During his career, he was said to have served the Toda-Matsudaira, the Takashima and the Suwa clans before passing away in 1810 CE at 78 years old.

Small pistol disguised as a Jutte (十手) on display at Matsumoto Castle. Photo courtesy of Alex Esteve.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL SECRET BOOKS AND THE TOGAKURE RYU

In a previous chapter I mentioned that the refugees who escaped from Oda Nobunaga's invasion of Iga came to live in Negoro and Saika (雑賀).[136] Some of these *shinobi* organized and merged with the *Saika Ryū ninja* of the Kishū domain.[137] *Ninjutsu* researcher and historical novel writer Mr. Hajime Tsujikaze (辻風一) told me in a private discussion that since it is unknown what happened to Momochi Tanba during Oda Nobunaga's invasion of Iga,[138] as his body was never recovered, he believes the most likely theory is that the Iga *ninja* generals (and *Togakure Ryū* masters), Momochi and Fujibayashi escaped from Kashiwahara Castle the evening before the remaining forces surrendered to Oda. They then made their way out of Iga and were guided and protected by the *shugenja* of Negoro and Saika. In return, the Iga refugees taught *ninjutsu* to the Negoro *shugenja*, known as *gyoningata* (行人方).[139] As the *gyoningata* were historically temple protectors and accustomed to carrying muskets and rifles,[140] the new *ninjutsu* styles of Negoro and Saika relied heavily on their skills as marksmen and sharpshooters.



Arquebus muskets used by the warrior monks at Saika. Photo author's collection

According to Toda Shinryuken, after the Momochi family escaped to Kishū, *Iga Ryū* and

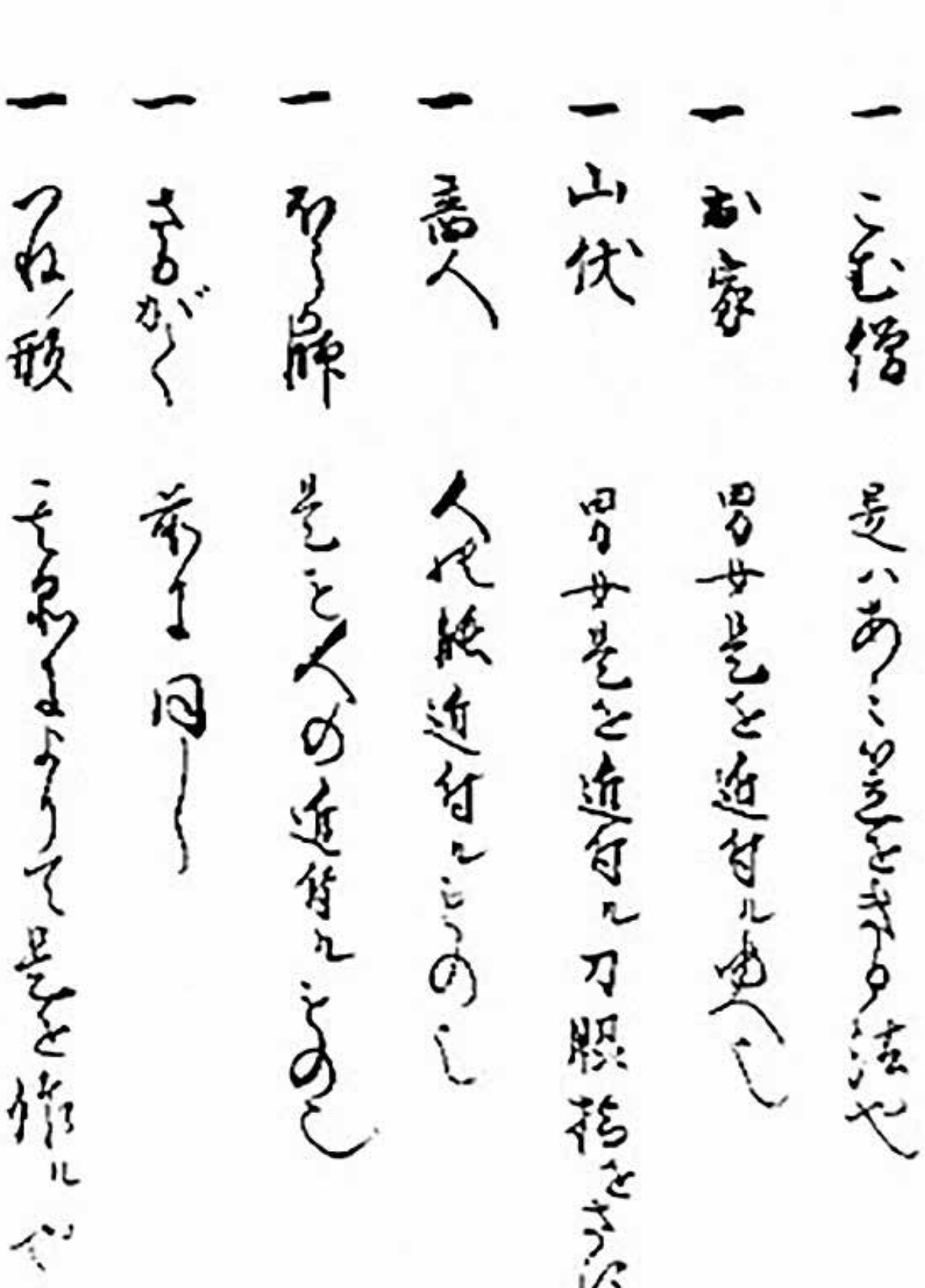
136 忍の里の記　、石川正知、翠楊社、1982、P. 168
137 真説・日本忍者列伝、龍太郎小山、荒地出版社、1964、P. 146
138 月刊　観世、Volume 33, Issues 7-12、檜書店、1966、P. 87
139 国境物語 : 大和の歴史と旅、　読売新聞大阪本社、広済堂出版、1975、P. 101
140 鉄砲: 伝来とその影響、洞富雄、思文閣出版、1991、P. 153

Togakure Ryū ninjutsu was passed on to the Natori family in Kishū.[141] The Natori family were already masters of their family art the *Natori Ryū* and also studied *Shin Kusunoki Ryū* from Kusunoki Fuden (楠不伝).[142] At the end of the 1600's these *Ryū* were eventually taught to the renown military scientist, Nattori Sanjuro Masazumi, also known as Natori Seiryuken (名取青竜軒), author of the major *ninjutsu* manuscript titled *Shoninki* (正忍記).[143]

Drawing by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1855 CE.
Ashigaru firing Japanese muskets in a volley.
Photo author's collection.

Seiryuken was a powerful samurai from the Kii branch of the Tokugawa clan, another clan like the Toda-Matsudaira that were directly related by blood to the shogun. He completed the manuscript in 1681 CE and in it he describes the various uses of *shinobi* and their secret techniques. Like all good *ninja*, Natori went by many names and aliases during his lifetime, including Natori Masatake, Fuji no Shuishi Masatake and Fujibayashi Masatake. Some documents place his death due to an illness in 1708 while his birth year is completely unknown. He is known as the founder of the *Kishū Ryū* of *ninjutsu*.[144] His newly formed *Kishū Ryū* specialized in spying techniques and developed large information gathering networks for the Tokugawa. His father, Natori Masatomi, was the director of military operations for the *daimyo* lord Tokugawa Yorinobu and taught the young Seiryuken *ninjutsu* from an early age.

141 武藝流派辭典、綿谷雪、山田忠史、人物往來社、1963、P. 294
142 忍者と忍術、 部新十郎、 日新聞社、1996、P. 71
143 中央公論、Issues 1-2、反省社、1969、P. 305
144 國學院雜誌、Volume 97、國學院大學、1996、P. 74



A page from the Shoninki describing the ninja's seven methods of disguise

The lineage chart of the *Togakure Ryū* compiled by Takamatsu Sōke in the 1900s shows that the *Iga* and *Togakure Ryū* were handed down within the Natori family for three generations before passing into the Toda family. The third generation of the Natori family to receive the teachings was the above-mentioned Natori Seiryuken.[145] Based on this oral history of Takamatsu's grandfather, Toda Shinryuken, this means that the *Shoninki* manuscript was written by a fully recognized master of the *Iga* and *Togakure Ryū*. He was of course educated in several different branches and schools of *ninjutsu*, so I think it is safe to say that the *Shoninki* is an expression of Seiryuken's thinking on all *ninjutsu* and not just the *Togakure Ryū*.

Lineage of Iga and Togakure Ryū, from the Momochi Clan to the Toda Clan:[146]

百地氏 (百地三之丞)
Momochi Clan (Momochi San no Suke)

野村大炊孫太夫
Nomura no Oimagodayu (listed in the Bansenshukai)

新堂小太郎
Shindo Kotaro (listed in the Bansenshukai)

楯岡道順
Tateoka Dojun (Iga middle-ranking *ninja*)

伊賀崎木猿
Igasaki no Kizaru (possibly the son of Tateoka Dojun)

名取兵内
Natori Heinai

名取兵右衛門
Natori Hyoeimon

名取青竜軒
Natori Seiryuken (author of the Shoninki)

丹波遠心
Tanba Enshin

戸田盛柳信綱
Toda Seiryu Nobutsuna

145 武藝流派辭典、綿谷雪、山田忠史、人物往來社、1963、P. 294

146 武藝流派辭典、綿谷雪、山田忠史、人物往來社、1963、P. 294

In Seiryuken's Shoninki, he describes the espionage strategies of the native *shinobi* from Kishū in addition to what they would have learned from the *Iga* and *Togakure* warriors. The manuscript is broken up into a preface, three scrolls and a final epilogue. The first scroll reveals little known tricks for topics like disguise and concealment, information gathering skills and breaking and entering techniques. The second scroll reveals *ninja* methods of defense against enemy spies and reading the true intentions of others. One of the deepest topics in terms of morals is the interchanging of truth and falsehood (*kyojitsu*). Lastly, the final scroll elaborates on techniques for controlling the emotions of the self and others.

After Seiryuken, the *Togakure Ryū ninjutsu* traditions were passed on to Tanba Enshin (**丹波遠心**) and Tobari Tenzen (**戸張典善**), both are *shinobi* about whom we know very little. Tenzen was the master who taught the *Togakure Ryū* to Toda Seiryu Nobutsuna (**戸田盛柳信綱**) and so began the long stretch of eight generations of Toda family masters to carry the *Togakure Ryū* through the Edo Period and into modern times.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami, the other *Iga ninja* general that is said to have escaped from Kashiwahara Castle during the night with Momochi Tanba, also made his way to safety. Interestingly, the difference with Fujibayashi from Hattori Hanzo and Momochi Tanba is that after the invasion Fujibayashi returned to Yubune, his home village in Iga. I assume he stayed away until Oda Nobunaga's death and then returned to lead the remnants of the *Iga ninja* under the new Tokugawa Shogun. But we will most likely never know as his life is undocumented.

As many *ninjutsu* historians are aware, Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami is known as one of the three great Iga *ninja* leaders at the time of Oda Nobunaga's invasion of Iga. The Hattori family and the Momochi family together maintained control of the southern portion of Iga while the Fujibayashi family ran the northern regions where the Iga territory met up with neighboring Koga.[147] The descendants of Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami to this day still live in Yubune, Iga, and have preserved many of the family's old documents.

One of the most important of these for our investigation into the hidden history of the *Togakure Ryū* is the *Fujibayashi Yuishogaki* (**藤林家由緒書**) or '*The Chronicles of the Fujibayashi Family*'. In this document it states that Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami taught the military strategist Yamamoto Kansuke *ninjutsu* and *ninja* fire-arts including gunnery, smoke signals, fireworks, fire arrows etc.[148] Unfortunately, it does not specifically state in the document that Fujibayashi taught him '*Togakure Ryū*' *ninjutsu*.

Rather, it only says he taught Yamamoto *ninjutsu* -- Togakure Ryū is inferred by Japanese historians because Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami's clan were warriors from Togakushi mountain and because of the clan's close association with the '*kami*' of Togakushi Shrine. The family fled to Iga from Togakushi when they lost a battle to the Hojo clan in 1213 CE.[149] It is important to note that there is no other *ninjutsu ryū* from Togakure mountain. So, by default the researchers consider this lineage to be *Togakure Ryū*.

147 **図説・日本武道辞典、笹間良彦、柏書房、**2003、P. 50

148 **名刀幻想辞典、**Accessed November 2018 https://meitou.info/index.php/%E8%97%A4%E6%9E%97%E9%95%B7%E9%96%80%E5%AE%88

149 The Root of Ninja, Accessed November 2018, http://www.ninja-museum.com/ninja-database/?p=518

What is interesting about this is that Yamamoto Kansuke, after studying *Togakure Ryū ninjutsu*, was involved with the development of Takeda Shingen's *Kōshū Ryū ninjutsu*. The *Kōshū Ryū* was most well known as a school of military science but it also had a separate branch of *ninjutsu* that specialized in reconnaissance and scouting. [150] This *Ryū* produced many famous *ninja* such as Watanabe Yasazaemon (渡辺弥三左衛門).

Grave of Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami at Shokaku Temple (正覚寺). There are 25 family graves here at the temple with many others from his clan. Photo author's collection.

When Nagato no Kami's ancestors fled to Iga from Togakushi they built a fortress there. The family's strong connection to the Togakushi Shrine in Shinano was so great that they went through the effort to transplant their *Shinto* deity *Amenotajikarao no Mikoto* (天手力雄命) via a very special *Shinto* ceremony called *kanjō* (勧請) in Iga and enshrined it at *Tejikara* Shrine, the Fujibayashi family shrine. *Amenotajikarao* is the deity of athleticism and physical power.

In Iga province alone, Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami is said to have had forty men under him as mid-level commanders (*chunin* 中忍) and over 300 men at the *ninja* operative level (*genin* 下忍). This made him a true commanding general (*jonin* 上忍) in every sense of the word. According to tradition, after the invasion Fujibayashi escaped to the Kishū area and served the Kishū-Tokugawa family. [151] Eventually he returned to his homeland in Iga but the men he and Momochi are rumored to have trained, the *Kishū Ryū*, later became the cornerstone units for the Shogun's '*Onmitsu*' (隠密) or '*secret operations group*'. [152]

150 山本勘助101の謎: その実像から「川中島の戦い」の内幕まで、川口素生、PHP研究所、2006、P. XXXiii

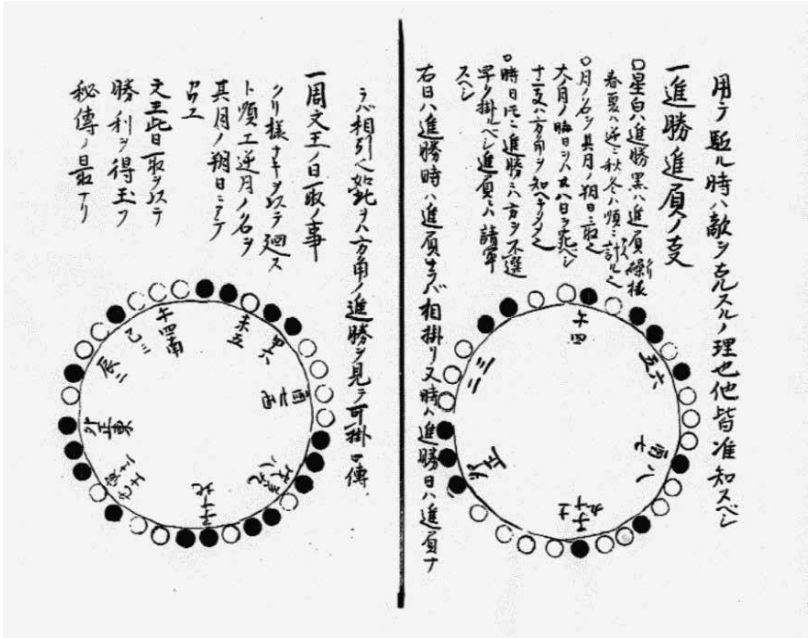
151 津本陽歴史長篇全集、Volume 8、津本陽歴史長篇全集、津本陽、角川書店、2000、P. 52

152 偽史と奇書の日本史、佐伯修、現代書館、2007、P. 150

Tejikara Jinja (手力神社), Photo author's collection. This shrine is dedicated to Ame no Tejikara no Mikoto, a kami in Japanese mythology. The sun goddess, Amaterasu, once hid after a battle with her brother, plunging the world into darkness until finally lured out by the spirit of merriment, dancing and singing from Ame-no-Uzume. With great ceremony this shrine's spirit was brought to this new location from the Togakushi Shrine in the Shinshu region. Generations later this was Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami's guardian shrine and he lived in the immediate area. Annually, on October 17th the shrine holds a fireworks festival and the lay people make "summer's end wishes" with special ninja smoke bombs. This annual fireworks festival is recorded as being started by Nagato no Kami himself. Until the end of the Taisho period (1912~1926 CE) the gunpowder recipes and fireworks skills were still being passed on traditionally and the youth of the shrine made all the fireworks by hand.

Even though we know very little about the life of Nagato no Kami, he did in fact leave behind a huge legacy. In 1676 CE his direct descendant Fujibayashi Yasutake (藤林保武) compiled all of the *ninjutsu* knowledge the Fujibayashi family had and wrote the *Bansenshukai*, a massive multi-volume encyclopedia of the secret techniques, strategies and tools of the *ninja* as taught within the Fujibayashi clan. It is my opinion that a good portion, if not most, of these secrets must have originated from the *Togakure Ryū*. A good portion of the historical information that scholars have about the *ninja* and *ninjutsu* today comes from this series of books.

Within Tsuji, in the eastern part of Yubune, there are ruins to be found of Fujibayashi Nagato no Kami's castle. Bluffs, moats, earthen and stone walls can still be seen today. In the 2017 guide book for the town of Ayama in Iga, it states that "Nagato no Kami was a master of *Togakure Ryū Ninjutsu* and he specialized in the arts of fire, explosives, smoke techniques and signal fires".



A page from the once secret Bansenshukai manuscript, author's collection

CHAPTER 9

FALCONRY AND THE TODA NINJA

One image that does not often come up as a stereotype of the *ninja*, at least not in movies or books, is that of the *ninja* as a master of falconry. But historically we know this was frequently so. Several of the families or clans associated with *shinobi* or *ninja* activities were falconers stemming from the noble *Suwa Ryū* (諏訪流) of falconry that developed in the Suwa region not far from Togakushi mountain. The shrine at Mt. Togakushi and the Suwa Grand Shrine share a very special bond. They both enshrine the same *kami* and both use the *Kama Manji* (鎌卍), seen on the doors in the accompanying photo, as their shrine's symbol. This is the symbol of the *Bujin* (武神) or the deity *kami* of war.

Togakushi and Suwa both enshrine the same kami, and both use the Kama Manji (鎌卍) as their shrine's symbol. This is the symbol of the Bujin (武神) or the kami of war. Photo author's collection.

Emperors throughout the ages, daimyo lords and shoguns were all very fond of falconry. Being busy leaders, their birds were raised and cared for by others of the warrior class who specialized in the task and who were more proficient and skilled in the techniques of falconry. Naturally, this led to falconers becoming close to members of the imperial family and the various warlords. They, as falconers, didn't simply just raise falcons. It was their duty and honor to also organize and attended big hunts. Falcon masters, known as *Takasho* or *Takajo* (鷹匠), often took discreet breaks and intimate meals with their benefactors, leading them to learning secrets or valuable information about these powerful people.

Old painting of a Takasho (鷹匠) or 'falcon master'. Photo author's collection

At a time and in a society where most people were severely restricted in terms of where they could and couldn't go, and most were restricted to their home areas, the falconers of people of high status, such as emperors or shoguns, would often have the right to move freely outside of their immediate homelands. They would even be issued special passes, very much like the passports of today, on wooden tablets. With these the *takasho* could travel the whole length of the country. For very special occasions, there were types of passes that even allowed the *takasho* to move around and travel at night. Since the takasho had a vast amount of personal knowledge of the Shogun or their Daimyo and their families, it naturally led to many falconers developing relationships with spies and *shinobi*.[153] As falconers, they were able to travel the land, observe the situation in all the territories, and then report back to their general.

Special passes that allowed individuals to be out at night past curfew. The Edo period was a highly regulated society and free travel from place to place was not allowed. Photo author's collection.

As I noted in an earlier chapter, the Sanada family were historically recorded as retaining *suppa*, *yamabushi* and *shugenja* as *shinobi* from the Togakushi area. Recently, researchers are coming to believe that the Sanada family were a tributary branch of the Nezu family.[154] The Nezu, as one of 'the three great houses' of the powerful Shigeno clan were well known for their relationship to the tradition of *Suwa Ryū* falconry and unconventional warfare. Nezu Nobumasa, along with being a master *Suwa Ryū* falconer (*takasho*), was also one of the contributing founders of the *Kōyō Ryū* of *ninjutsu*, a *shinobi* lineage that served the great military commander Takeda Shingen. Nobumasa is also said to have organized a female *shinobi* unit within the *Nezu Ryū*.

153 Slow-Life、Accessed April 2019、http://www.slow-life.co.jp/map/column1511.html、 家康公の身辺の秘密情報にも接しており、このため鷹匠の住む屋敷には、忍者も出入りしていたと言われています。

154 にっぽん謎と伝 めぐり、新人物往来社、1998、p. 35

Suwa Ryū, a style based on Japan's oldest and original school of falconry, the *Kuretake Ryū* (呉竹流), was well known throughout Japan for its annual ritual hunt. This is an event where prey caught by falcons is gifted to the Suwa Grand Shrine to please the enshrined *kami*. Every year this event would draw many of the elite from Matsumoto and other local castles to see the art of falconry in action. Both major ruling families of Matsumoto castle, the Mizuno clan and the Toda, were great proponents of the *Suwa Ryū* of falconry while administering the Matsumoto domain throughout the Edo Period.

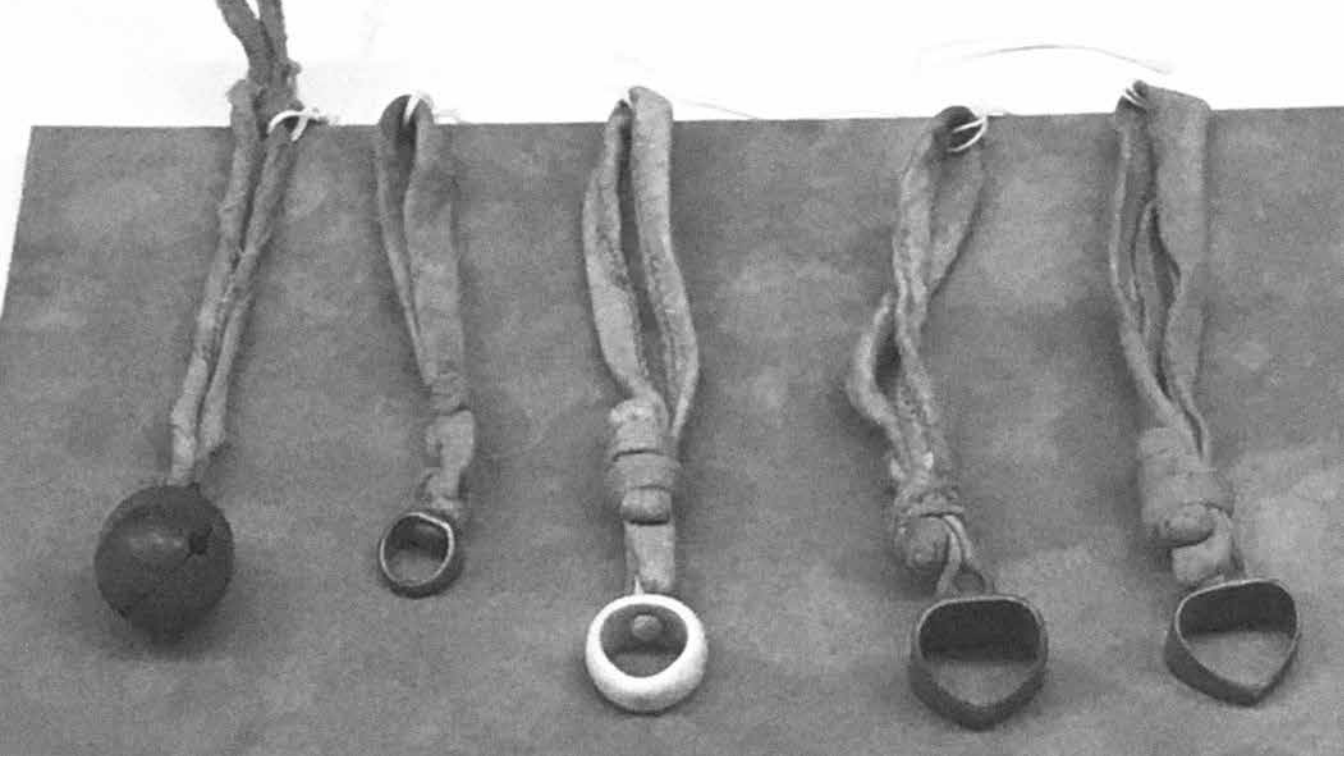
Suwa Grand Shrine, Kamisha Maemiya,* 諏訪大社 上社 前宮. *Every year the ritual hunt held here would draw many of the elite from Matsumoto and other local castles out to see the art of falconry in action. Photo author's collection.

The Shizuoka prefectural government on Japan's main island of Honshu states that it was common for *shinobi* to go in and out of the houses of the Shogun's *takasho*.[155] As such, the main *takasho* house that served the Shogun's family from the beginning of the *Tokugawa Bakufu* government was that of the Toda-Matsudaira clan, starting with Toda Katsunori and his half-brother Toda Mitsusada at the very beginning of the 17th century.[156] The Toda family had served the Matsudaira (Tokugawa) from further back in history but it was during Katsunori's lifetime that Tokugawa Ieyasu became *Shogun* and formed the *Bakufu* government thereby making the Toda family and the *Suwa Ryū* a pillar of Tokugawa culture. Katsunori and Mitsusada were from the same Toda-Matsudaira clan branch as the Toda family that served as daimyo at Matsumoto Castle for 11 generations and they often taught the Shogun's immediate family the art of falconry from this castle.[157] The Toda family's devotion to the art of falconry is very evident. Just outside of the moat area to the northeast of Matsumoto castle is an area called *Takasho Machi*. Traditionally this place was a residential area for the samurai of Matsumoto castle through the late 1500s and early 1600s, but around 1648 CE it was reallocated to the Toda family falconry training grounds and named '*Takasho Machi*'.

155 http://www.visit-shizuoka.com/t/oogosho400/study/07_19.htm (Accessed December 30, 2018)

156 大日本近世史料: 細川家史料、Part 9, Volume 14 of 大日本近世史料: 細川家史料、東京大學、史料編纂所、東京大學出版會、1969、p. 1

157 松江藩松平直政時代の鷹書と鷹匠、宮内庁書陵部所蔵の鷹書・鷹詞の研究、三保サト子＆忠夫、島根県立大学短期大学部松江キャンパス研究紀要Vol. 50 31〜42 (2012) 、P. 3



Toda family takasho equipment on display at the Matsumoto Castle in Nagano. Photo courtesy of Alex Esteve

While Katsunori was an accomplished *takasho*, because of his prowess as a superior swordsman, he served the Shogun in a military capacity. This was the case with his grandson, Sadakichi as well. While as a young man he became a *takasho*, he later also became a leader in the elite *Kojunin* (小十人組) security unit in 1682 CE.[158] The first Tokugawa Shogun, Ieyasu, was so fond of falconry that in 1592 CE he appointed a warrior named Mamiya Nobushige as head falconer to a second unit that served the Bakufu. An area called *Zoshigaya*, near today's *Ikebukuro* district of Tokyo, was allotted as a second falconry training center. Like the Toda family, the Mamiya passed on the traditions of *Suwa Ryū* falconry while serving the Shogun for many generations.[159] Interestingly, both families also served the Shogun throughout the Edo period in the *onmitsu* and *oniwaban* security organizations. One famous Mamiya family member from the *onmitsu* is Mamiya Rinzō but the feats of his life and his hatred for foreigners could take up a whole volume on its own.

Uniformed armor for the elite Kojunin unit, also known as the Shogun's bodyguards. [160]

158 松江藩松平直政時代の鷹書と鷹匠、宮内庁書陵部所蔵の鷹書・鷹詞の研究、三保サト子＆忠夫、島根県立大学短期大学部松江キャンパス研究紀要Vol. 50 31〜42 (2012)、P. 9

159 家元制の展開　Vol. 2、 西山松之助、吉川弘文館、1982、p.88

160 国史研究会編『国史叢書 新東鑑附図』国史研究会、1915年、p. 7。国立国会図書館デジタルコレクション：永続的識別子

Mamiya Rinzō, also from a family of Takasho, became a Shogunate spy, a naval explorer who harboured an extreme dislike of all foreigners. Photo author's collection.

Beginning with Ieyasu, several generations of Tokugawa shoguns enjoyed and supported falconry and hunting. But despite this long tradition, the sixth shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi prohibited the practice and its tradition in his *Shorui Awaremi no Rei* (生類憐みの令), an edict forbidding cruelty to animals. He believed that forcing hawks and other birds of prey to take down much bigger game than they would in nature was cruel, so he put a stop to it. The hawks that had been bred and raised by the Shogun's falconry units were taken to distant islands and set free. The already very secretive art went deeper underground during both Tsunayoshi's reign and the reign of the seventh shogun, Tokugawa Ietsugu.

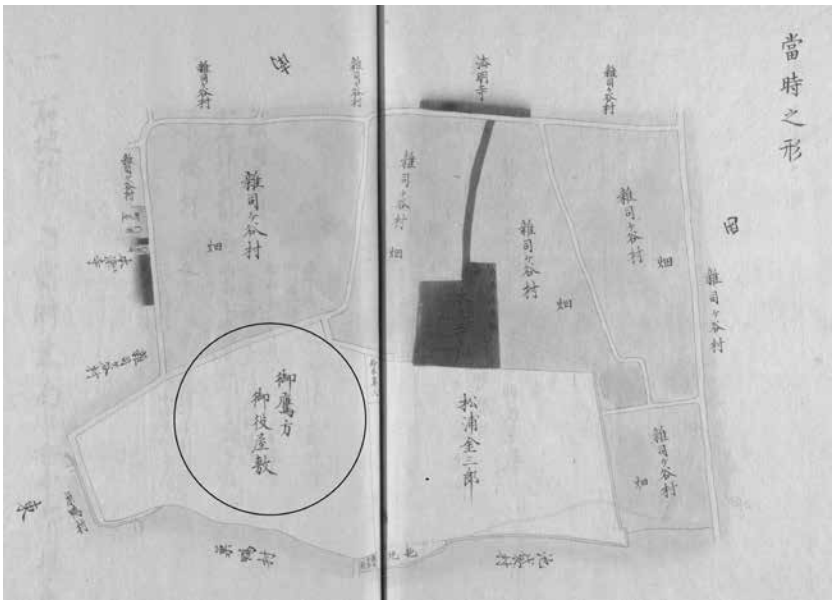
The sixth Tokugawa Shogun, Tsunayoshi, the man who forced the art of falconry to go underground. Photo: Tokugawa Art Museum.

In 1716 CE when the eighth Shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune, came into power he immediately brought back the practice of falconry and went to great ends to restore it to its original status. In October of the same year he re-opened several of the old hunting grounds in Edo with great ceremony and ten miles in every direction from Edo Castle became '*no hunting*' grounds. Of course this included areas where the various daimyo and other retainers lived but it was prohibited to hunt birds or any other animals within this restricted area. Soon after in November, at the appointment of the Shogun himself, Toda Katsufusa (戸田勝房), a mysterious warrior that we know very little about other than that he was the son of Toda Shichinosuke Masayoshi (戸田七之助正吉), became one of two head falconers to the Shogun and his government.[161] The other person was Mamiya Atsunobu (間宮敦信) from the same family clan as the Shogunate *onmitsu* operative Mamiya Rinzō.

161 近世国家の支配構造、雄山閣出版、1986、p.286

Map of the Ichigaya falconry training grounds and residences for Toda Shichinosuke Masayoshi's unit. This property is just to the northwest of Hattori Hanzo's gate to Edo castle.
Photo: 御府内往還其外沿革図書. 十一

We do know, since falconry had been illegal for some time, that all masters of falconry had to have been carrying on the traditions of their art in secret. Before the ban against falconry Katsufusa's father, Shichinosuke, had been the head *takasho* at the falconry training grounds in Ichigaya very near Hattori Hanzo's castle gate and living quarters. The Iga-Hyakuningumi sharpshooter's residences and musket practice ranges were just a short walk to the northwest of that. Then, as if by design, just neighboring to the north of that was the *Zoshigaya* falconry grounds that were controlled by the Mamiya family and then later the same Toda family.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It seems like too much of a coincidence that from the start of the Edo period the Tokugawa shoguns kept the *Iga* and *Koga no mono* (*ninja*), the sharpshooters, the *onmitsu* spies and covert falconry *torimi* scouts all in one little section of Edo to the west-northwest of the Shogun's castle. It seems more like it was all part of a master plan for the Shogun's security. In fact, there was a passage a few kilometers long, part of it underground, that ran from Hanzo's gate to the *Kaichu Inari* Shrine located in the living quarters of the *Iga no mono* and *Iga-Hyakuningumi* sharpshooter brigade. From there, under their protection, the Shogun could be assured a safe exit westward from the city should he need to if attacked by surprise. [162]

In 1716 CE, when Tokugawa Yoshimune went from being the *daimyo* lord of the Kishu domain to shogun and moved to Edo castle, more than two hundred retainers of the Kishu domain also travelled to Edo to be retainers of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

Minna-Chu Inari Jinja, home shrine to the Igamono ninja that were brought to Edo with Hattori Hanzo and formed the musketeer unit called the Hyakunin Teppo-gumi. Photo author's collection

To the favored retainers, Yoshimune assigned residences that were near him and the castle in Edo. Grudgingly, retainers that were close to the previous lord moved further from the center of Edo and the castle. *Takasho* Toda Gosuke Katsube (**戸田五助勝便**), in June of 1718 CE was promoted to the somewhat prestigious position of *tsukaiban* (**使番**) for the Tokugawa Shogunate.[163] A *tsukaiban's* duties during the Edo period primarily included inspection and auditing various shogunate official's projects and reports. The salary for this responsibility averages out to be approximately $500,000 USD per year in today's money. In 1720 CE he also took on responsibility for a shogunate falconry unit. When taking on this responsibility he brought 85 men with him to Edo from Kishu. They were allotted plots of land in Komagome (**駒込**), to the north of the castle as seen in the accompanying photo. Eighteen *takasho* were each given approximately 7,100 square feet of land to build their homes on.[164]

Later, in 1722 CE, land in Sendagi (**千駄木**) just to the east of Komagome was again allocated. Fifteen *takasho* were again each given approximately 7,100 square feet of land to build their homes on and two bosses were given 8,800 square feet. Fifty *takasho doshin* (**鷹匠同心**) were also given approximately 6,000 square feet. In the crowded streets and villages of Edo, these were

162 Ninja Attack!: True Tales of Assassins, Samurai, and Outlaws. Authors: Hiroko Yoda, Matt Alt、Illustrated by Yutaka Kondo、Tuttle Publishing, 2013

163 古事類苑、皇典講究所 (小中村清矩、細川潤次郎、神宮司廳) Yoshikawa Kōbunkan、1967. P. 1

164 紀州藩士の幕臣化に伴う江戸屋敷獲得動向　(THE PROCESS OF ACQUIREMENT OF RESIDENCES IN EDO BY THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE RETAINERS WHO CAME FROM KISHU-HAN)、岩本　馨、日本建築学会計画系論文集　第561号，288，2002 年11 月

generous allotments. The fifteen Kishu born *Iga no mono* that were brought in that same year were given 5,800 square feet each in *Matsushima-chō* just outside the castle walls to the east.[165]

At the time the 8th Shogun reinstated the practice of falconry, Toda Katsufusa was found working as a simple master of tea at a temple called *Rinpukudenji* (林福伝寺).[166] A few years later as head *takasho*, Toda Katsufusa is recorded as having had under his command the following positions:

- Two *takashi doshin uwayaku* (鷹師同心上役) or 'master falconer unit bosses'
- Three *minarai* (見習い) or 'apprentices' to the 'bosses'
- Thirty-three *takashi doshin* 'master falconers'

Including Toda Katsufusa, his immediate unit comprised of 39 people and in 1770 CE, the large falconry training grounds of Zoshigaya that had been managed by the Mamiya family were transferred over to the Toda family in honor of their continuously devoted service to the Shogun.[167] They continued to serve the *Bakufu* until the mid-1850's when *takasho* apprentice Toda Hisajiro left Edo and his official positions behind and disappeared from istory, not even leaving behind a known public grave. But now we might know why, and I will discuss that in the next chapter.

Before moving on to the life of Toda Hisajiro I would like to cover a little about the subject of falconry and its relationship to the Shogun's secret security groups, the *onmitsu* and the *oniwaban*.

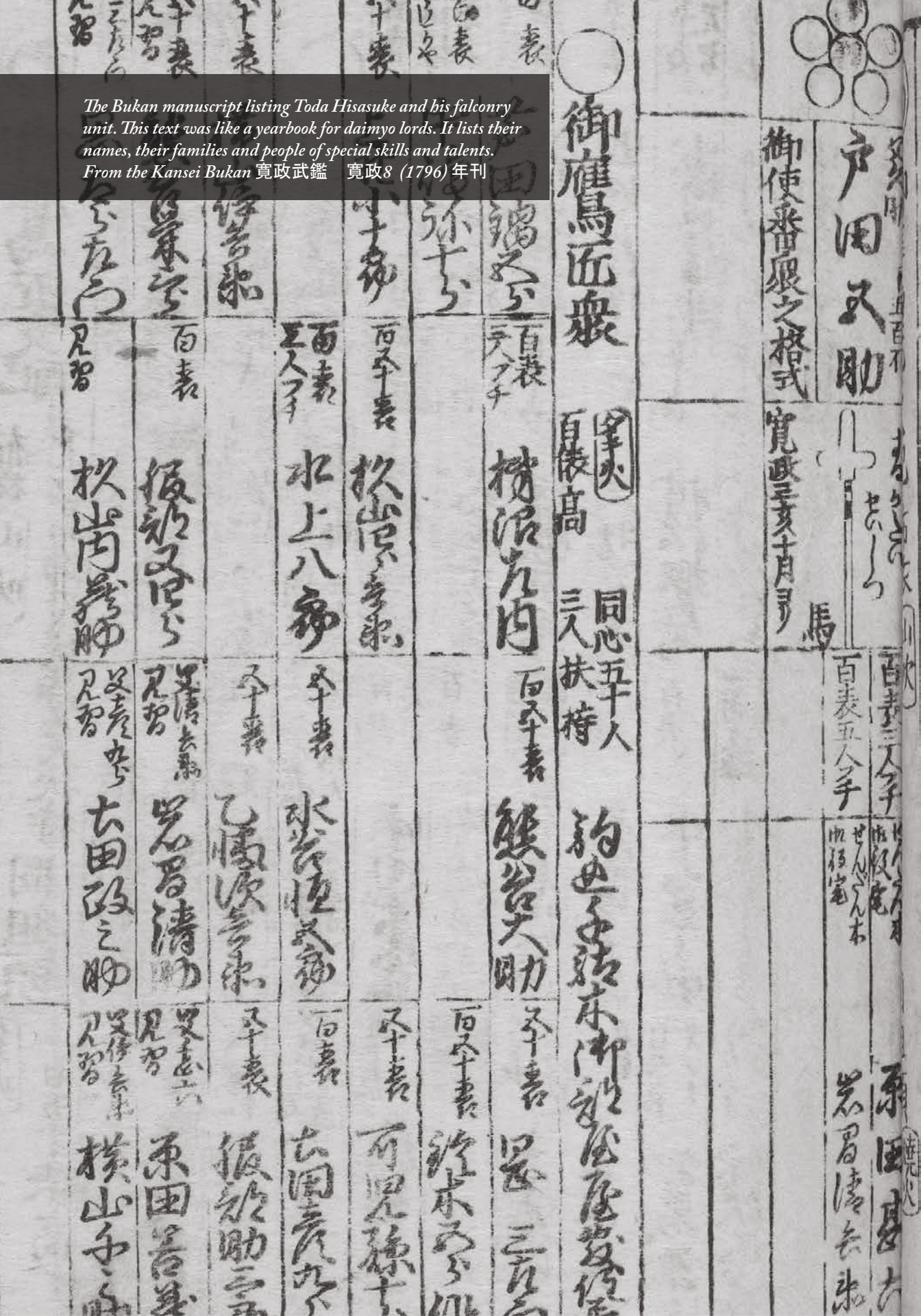
Within the ranks of falconry, as practiced by the *Bakufu*, there are bosses usually termed *takasho doshin uwayaku* (鷹匠同心上役) or *takasho-tō* (鷹匠頭). Under that there were fifty *takasho doshin* (鷹匠同心). To become a *takasho doshin* one first had to spend about a decade as an apprentice or *minarai* (見習). Below that were the *torimiyaku* (鳥見役).

Mid 1700's map of Komagome showing the residences for the Toda family takasho that were brought to Edo from Mikawa (red oval), it is in very close proximity to the Aoyama Hyakuningumi training grounds (red box).〔江戸切絵図〕. 音羽絵図

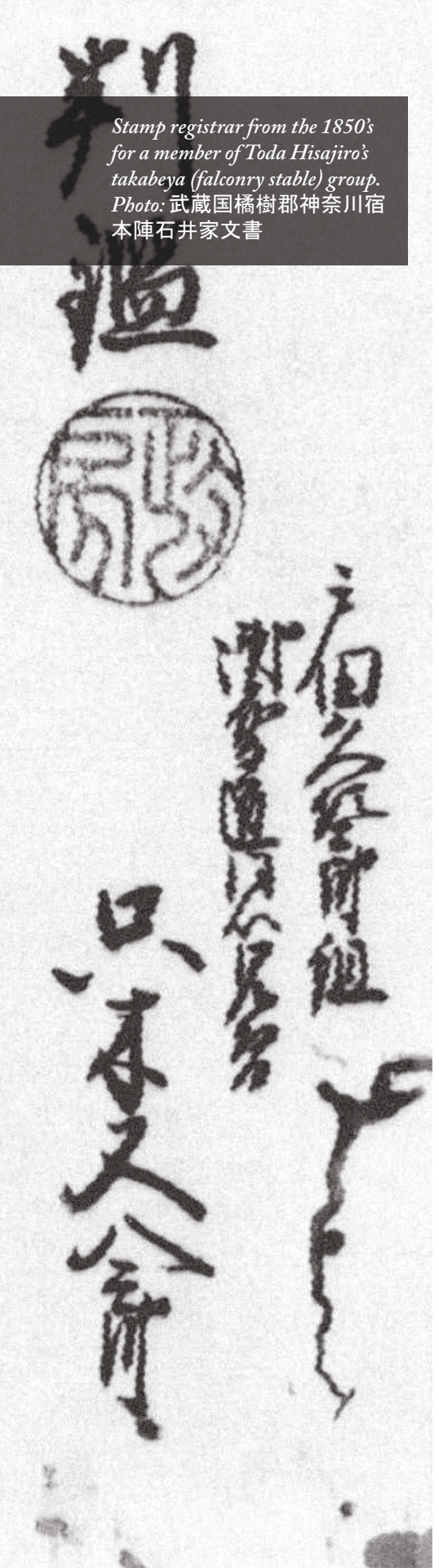
165 Same as above

166 The Shimin Kawaraban Website、Accessed April 3rd, 2019、http://www.kawara-ban.com/karasuyamahan.html

167 諏訪流放鷹術、スポーツ人類学研究領域、大塚紀子、P. 1



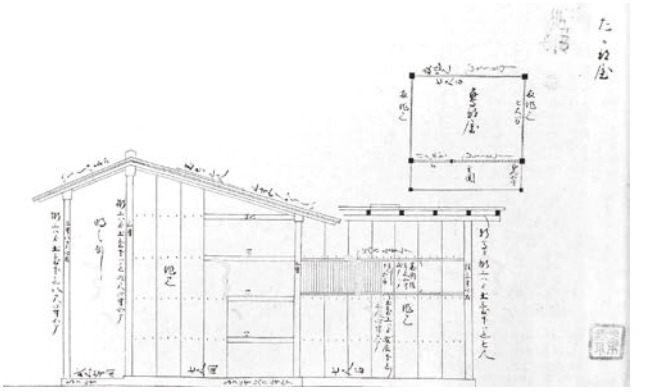
The Bukan manuscript listing Toda Hisasuke and his falconry unit. This text was like a yearbook for daimyo lords. It lists their names, their families and people of special skills and talents. From the Kansei Bukan 寛政武鑑　寛政*8 (1796)* 年刊



Stamp registrar from the 1850's for a member of Toda Hisajiro's takabeya (falconry stable) group. Photo: 武蔵国橘樹郡神奈川宿本陣石井家文書

A *torimi* had the responsibility of silently scouting the grounds ahead of the hunts to see if there was prey for the Shogun's falcons when he goes hunting. But this duty was just for outward appearances. Because the *torimi* were actually *onmitsu* agents working for the Shogun in secret.[168] In the Shogunate's Edo period publication called the *Bukan* (武鑑) it says that there were twenty-two *torimi* positions with two group leaders. Each group leader's salary was over $74,000 USD per year in today's terms and rates.[169] On top of that they were each given a bonus equivalent to about $2,000 USD.

The average *torimi* earned around $34,000 USD per year. There were also many other unnamed allowances of about $7,200 USD. Most likely these were given out as a type of danger pay or awards for jobs well done. The *torimi* position is a hereditary position and as such the eldest son walks with the father as an apprentice when he becomes about 14 or 15 years old. As an apprentice, one usually earned a salary of around $29,000 USD annually.[170]



Architectural design of a falconry stable built in 1845 CE by Nakamuraya Risuke. Photo author's collection.

168 日本の近世 6: 情報と交通、丸山雍成、中央公論社、1992、p.13

169 Manabow website、accessed April 3, 2019－日本銀行金融研究所貨幣博物館の資料では「当時と今の米の値段を比較すると、1両＝約4万円、大工の手間賃では1両＝30〜40万円 https://manabow.com/zatsugaku/column15/

170 This and the previous salary calculations are based on the amounts for falconers and torimi listed in the Kansei Bukan and adjusted by the author to represent average salaries in current 2019 USD currency. Any error is on the author's part.

The overt aspect of the *torimi's* job was to scout the six falconry hunting fields of Kasai, Iwatsuki, Toda, Nakano, Meguro and Shinagawa. As the seasons would change they would look to see if the Shogun's falcon's favorite prey such as cranes, geese, ducks etc, had arrived in the area or not. They were also on the lookout for foolish people who were poaching as it was a crime to hunt within those areas of Edo.

To feed the falcons in the Shogun's breeding farms, a *torimi* was expected to catch ten live sparrows a day as food. To catch a sparrow, a sticky rice cake was placed on the end of a bamboo rod and then the *torimi* needed to walk very quietly up to the sparrow from behind and touch the sticky rice cake to the bird from below. The sparrow must be caught alive or the hawks will not eat them.

How well the *torimi* developed this skill while playing as a child could have a big impact on their position in the future. It seems almost obvious that the silent walking skills of the *shinobi* from the Warring States period were being practiced here by *onmitsu* agents in the Edo Period.

If one caught more than the 10 required sparrows in a day, they could take the extra ones to breeding farms and sell them for a good price. It is easy to start thinking that the role of a *torimi* was a simple task. But the real reason for scouting ahead and investigating the favored birds for the hunt was to investigate the topography and geography of the areas to make materials such as maps and fortifications for the defense of Edo Castle.[171] Creating these strategic maps was a secret job so it is unsurprising to find those previously mentioned unknown wages that were paid.

Often when the average *torimi* received mission orders from his leader he quickly changed into traveling clothes at a nearby Kimono shop and went off on a journey of exploration. During the Edo period it was common for a *torimi* to leave Edo on a mission without knowing when he would return. As the name hints, the *torimi* investigated the migrations of wild birds and traveled around but it seems that a somewhat healthy income was certain, especially if one could walk silently and sneak up behind sparrows.

The *torimi*, with ulterior motives, sometimes entered the properties and estates of high-ranking samurai and mansions of domain lords under the guise of '*following and observing the bird's habitat situation*'. But, they were covertly gathering intelligence on all the Shogun's subordinates.[172] For their public responsibilities as a *torimi*, an average of $34,000 USD was a lot of income. So, it is not unlikely that they also had secret duties and responsibilities as intelligence agents for the *onmitsu* security groups during the Edo period.

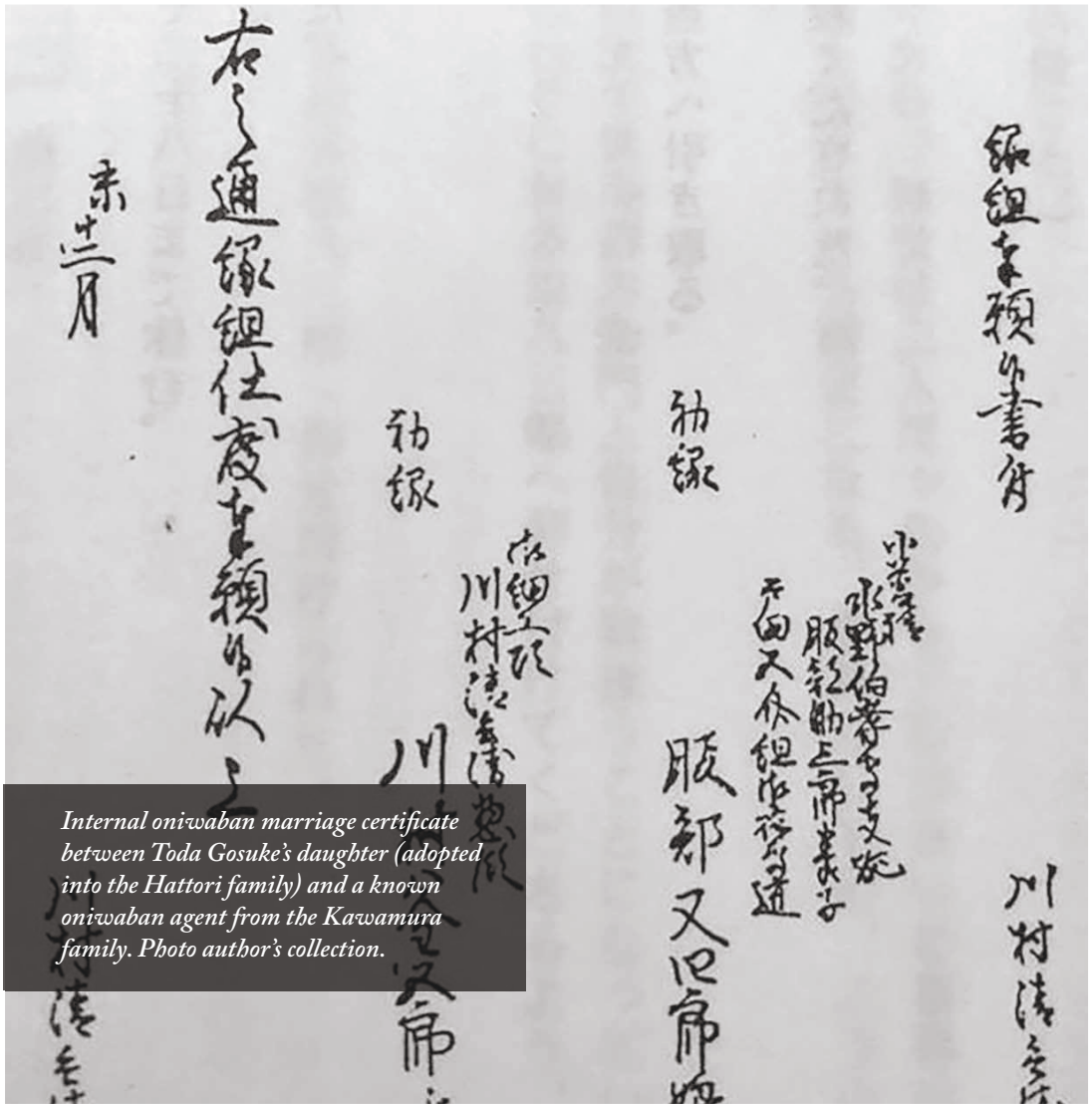
As discussed previously, around the turn of the 18th century, the 8th Shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune realized that although the *onmitsu* were under the authority of the Shogunate they did not work directly for him. So he decided to create a new security force for the innermost parts of his castle and as his personal security team, answering only to him. They were known as the *oniwaban* (御庭番) – '*oniwa*' meaning one's personal yard just outside of a house and '*ban*' referring to an agent or guard. These warriors guarded the Shogun in his most personal

171 武家の生活、三田村鳶魚、グーテンベルク21、2013
172 草加市史研究、草加市史編纂委員会、1981、p. 169

and private residences and were his security team when on the move. To keep the Shogun safe, they had to have open communications with and work in close proximity to the *onmitsu* agents.

Head falconer to the Shogunate, Toda Gosuke, Hisajiro's father, is believed to have worked in the *oniwaban* intelligence agency before becoming a magistrate in the Shogunate's newly formed modern army in 1867 CE. We know this because we can find his name alongside that of a Hattori family member in both a marriage and divorce case held internally within the super-secret group.[173] The members of the *Oniwaban* were not allowed to intermingle with people outside of the immediate group so records for things such as marriages, divorces, births, deaths etc. were all handled internally within the *oniwaban* itself. This is very strong evidence that suggests Toda Gosuke was indeed a member of the oniwaban or at least was important enough to have security clearance allowing his daughter to marry and later divorce a known *oniwaban* agent.

173 旗本の経済学: 御庭番川村修富の手留帳、小松重男、新潮社、1991、P. 182 & 187



Internal oniwaban marriage certificate between Toda Gosuke's daughter (adopted into the Hattori family) and a known oniwaban agent from the Kawamura family. Photo author's collection.

The men of the *oniwaban* were all direct descendants of a type of *shinobi* called *Kusurigome Yaku* (薬込役) who were brought to Edo by Tokugawa Yoshimune from his homeland in Kishū.[174] Although these men were brought to Edo from *Mikawa* in *Kishū*, their ancestors and traditions as *shinobi* were from the nearby Iga region to the west and they had been living and serving the Matsudaira family for generations from a district in *Mikawa* known as *Igacho* (伊賀町) or *Iga Town*. This is also the birthplace of the infamous Hattori Hanzo whom we discussed in an earlier chapter.[175]

Kamisoyagi Kumano Shrine in Kanagawa, near Yokohama. This location was originally a shrine dedicated to Susano-o No Mikoto, but in 1694 CE Toda Gosuke began construction of the Kumano Shrine Daigongen. It is said he brought the faith here with him from Mikawa. Photo author's collection.

Toda Gosuke's eleventh generation previous great-grandfather and falconry master, Toda Sadakichi is also documented as having served in a unit of the *oniwaban* called the *Kojuninkaku Oniwaban* (小十人格御庭番) just after it was established. He remained in this position until his death in February of 1716 CE.

The fact that the Toda family was so deeply involved for so long with the Shogun's personal and family security through their activities in falconry, *onmitsu* spy networks and *oniwaban* security units, demonstrates that they were keeping with their family *shinobi* traditions and the '*hidden lineage*' of their distant past. At the end of the Edo period, Toda Hisajiro was the last Toda family *takasho* to the Shogun and one of the original head swordsmanship professors at the *Kobusho* military science academy when it was organized in 1854 CE.

There is no evidence to suggest that Hisajiro was a direct member of the *oniwaban* or that he acted as a spy but positions in the *onmitsu* and *oniwaban* were almost always hereditary and he definitely had family members within these organizations including his father. But one question to ask though is why would the Shogun and his ministers appoint a *takasho* as a head swordsmanship instructor to the government?

174 綱吉と吉宗、深井雅海、吉川弘文館、2012、P. 132
175 服部半蔵: 家康を支えた諜報参謀、寺林峻、PHP研究所、1998、P. 89

Typical late Edo-Period dress for a samurai practicing swordsmanship at the Shogun's top military academy, the Kobusho

CHAPTER 10

TODA HISAJIRO BECOMES TODA SHINRYUKEN MASAMITSU

The reason that this book exists stems from a strong sense of dissatisfaction on behalf of the author at what was available in terms of research regarding the history of the Toda family martial arts and the *Togakure Ryū* of *ninjutsu* itself.

This school is widely practiced as part of the martial arts taught by the Bujinkan Dōjō and related offshoots in Japan and as a result, its name is widely known in the martial arts community around the world. However precious little is known in terms of the historicity of the school, and in particular about the real identity of the man who safeguarded its passage into the modern era – Toda Shinryuken Masamitsu.

According to the teachings of the *Togakure Ryū*, this man taught this art to his grandson Takamatsu Toshitsugu, who in turn taught it to Hatsumi Masaaki, the current headmaster of the Bujinkan Dōjō. While Hatsumi Sensei's training relationship with his mentor Takamatsu has been documented extensively in the form of photographs, recorded interviews and even video footage, the same cannot be said of Takamatsu Toshitsugu's training relationship with his grandfather.

Who was this man Toda Shinryuken Masamitsu and why did it appear that so little information survived to the present day about his life and his death? Hatsumi Sensei professes to have never had the inclination or time to put serious time and effort into searching for records of him, adding that he was and is content to trust the word of his teacher Takamatsu. So far, no scrolls or manuscripts other than those written by Takamatsu Toshitsugu and currently in the possession of Hatsumi Masaaki, have surfaced that mention Toda Sensei.[176]

176 According to Hatsumi Soke of the Bujinkan martial arts organization, he has never had or seen a manuscript/scroll written in Toda's hand. He was only given scrolls regarding the Togakure Ryū in his teacher's handwriting. This has been confirmed with Hatsumi Soke by the author on several occasions.

But surely some details remained to be discovered about this man? A few months before the end of 2017, I decided to make an all-out, no holds barred search for Toda. For many years online forums had been filled with questions from *ninjutsu* students and *ninja* fans from around the world regarding the truth of the *Togakure Ryū* lineage. Was Toda Shinryuken Masamitsu, the 32nd headmaster, a real historical figure? If so, why are details of his life so obscure? Or was this name perhaps a cynical invention, part of a cover story used by Takamatsu Toshitsugu to hide the fact that he had in fact made up the *Togakure Ryū*?

In assessing these questions, there are some important facts to bear in mind. The first is that historically speaking, *ninjutsu* was a very secret art and to possess any kind of document that even hinted a person was a *shinobi* could get them or their loved ones killed. There were times when things were put down in writing but in general it was a practice that was avoided. In fact, *ninjutsu* researcher and honorary Director of the Iga *Ninja* Museum in Iga Ueno, Kawakami Junichi, states in his research that "*ninjutsu* is a family tradition, so usually there was no ranks or licensing such as *Menkyo*, *Kaiden*, *Menkyo Kaiden*, etc. Since one continues a family tradition, he or she receives the family lineage charts and stories that have been passed along over the generations. [177] *Ninjutsu* documents, martial arts and military science documents, *shinobi* equipment, weapons, etc. are all handed over to the inheritor."

Despite being separated by a significant amount of time and geographical distance, this statement by Kawakami tallies with Takamatsu's explanation for the lack of documentation predating his own training in *Togakure Ryū*. In addition, it's important to remember that Takamatsu Toshitsugu was a renowned martial artist in his own lifetime. Best known as an exponent of the *Kukishin Ryū*, he was also highly skilled in and licensed in many other martial arts, including the *Takagi Yoshin Ryū*, *Shinden Fudo Ryū*, *Koto Ryū*, *Gyokko Ryū*, *Gikan Ryū* amongst others.

The aforementioned *Kukishin Ryū* is widely known to contain information regarding *ninjutsu* so it seems that Takamatsu had little need to invent an entirely new and obscure *ninjutsu* school. It is also interesting to note that Takamatsu doesn't seem to have materially benefitted personally in his own lifetime from his association with the *Togakure Ryū* in any way.

According to the oral history passed on to Hatsumi Masaaki, Takamatsu had three main martial teachers over the course of his lifetime – Ishitani Sensei, Mizuta Sensei and Toda Shinryuken Masamitsu Sensei. According to his story, he was taken into the Kuki clan's family estate in Kobe City at the age of nine for education as a samurai and *shinobi* under the tutelage of his maternal grandfather, Toda Masamitsu.[178]

Toda was a famous martial artist who also went by the name '*Shinryuken*' and ran a *Koto Ryū Koppojutsu* and *Shinden Fudo Ryū Jujutsu* school along with a bone setting clinic in Kobe after the Boshin Civil War. Surely these details would be enough to allow some records of his existence to be tracked down?

177 読売新聞、三重大発！忍び学でござる、武術習得死ぬまで修行、川上仁一、Sept. 19, 2018 、https://www.yomiuri.co.jp/local/mie/feature/CO031511/20180919-OYTAT50002/

178 Tokyo Sports Newspaper, Ninja Sports, Koizumi Shizuo, #24, September 1963

The search started in 2017 by digging into various government archives and university libraries, some online and some requiring actual field trips, going in person to get access to the materials.

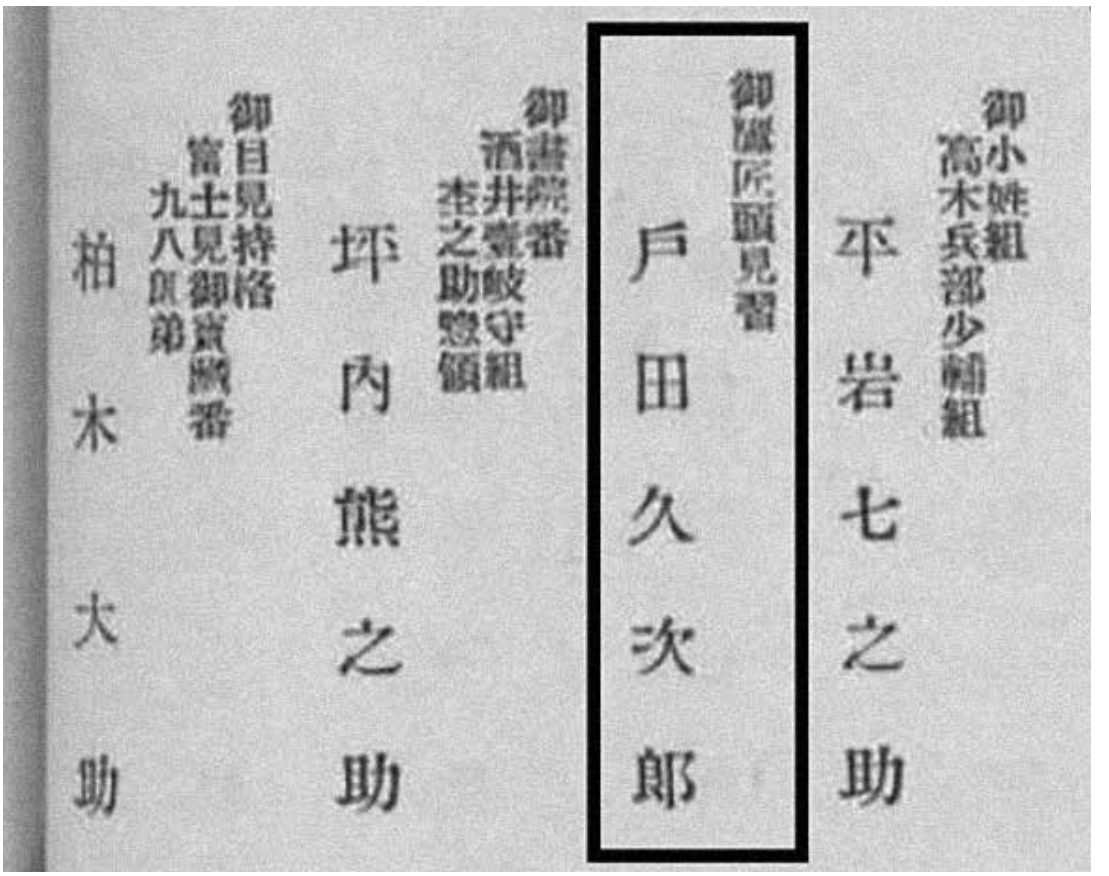
According to Takamatsu, his grandfather Toda Shinryuken Masamitsu was a shogunate swordsmanship instructor at the *Kobusho* (講武所) military academy near the end of the Edo Period who befriended the famous samurai and master of the spear, Takahashi Deishū.[179] This I figured would be the best place to begin my search as I knew that an organization like the *Kobusho* would have kept immaculate and detailed records.

179 忍法大全、初見良昭、講談社、2013、p. 163

*Takahashi Deishū, master instructor of Japanese spearman-ship and alleged colleague of Toda Shinryuken Masamitsu Sensei at the Kobusho. Photo: (*ビジュアル幕末*1000*人*)*世界文化社

At first the trail led nowhere -- the incomplete records I was able to obtain copies of did have a handful of Toda family members listed as sword instructors but none with the first name Masamitsu. Nor was his *bugo* (**武号**) or '*warrior name*' *Shinryuken* to be found. Initially all seemed to look bad for Takamatsu's story about his grandfather once being an instructor at the honorable *Kobusho*, a place where only the top martial artists of the day could teach. Competition was fierce and being a professor there meant a great deal as a warrior.[180]

Then, as if by luck, in the 7th volume of the *Kaishu Zenshu* (**海舟全集**) I found a complete list of *Kobusho Kenjutsu* instructors at the time of its grand opening in early 1855CE. Looking closely at those records, I noticed that other than for swordsmanship, there were no other instructors listed at all with the family name of Toda, and there was well over 200 names listed for the various segments of the academy including grappling (**柔術**), spearman-ship (**槍術**), gunnery (**砲術**), etc. Only in the list of sword instructors could I find a few Toda family members, and one of them, for a reason I could not make out at the time, stuck out like a sore thumb, Toda Hisajiro.



Toda Hisajiro listed as a sword instructor in the Sewakokoroe unit at the time of the Kobusho's opening in early 1855 CE. He also carries the title of 'apprentice to the chief falconer'.[181]

180 お江戸の役人 面白なんでも事典、中江克己、PHP研究所、 2010、P. 94
181 Pic from 海舟全集　第七巻、勝安　芳、勝安芳、1929、p. 84

Hisajiro was listed as first class kenjutsu instructor. Yet he stood out from the page to me, like he didn't belong there and he was not like all the others on the list. Most of the other men were famous swordsman from various reputable schools of swordsmanship. But Hisajiro was an unknown and had the title of *takasho minari* (鷹匠頭見習), or 'apprentice to the chief falconer'.

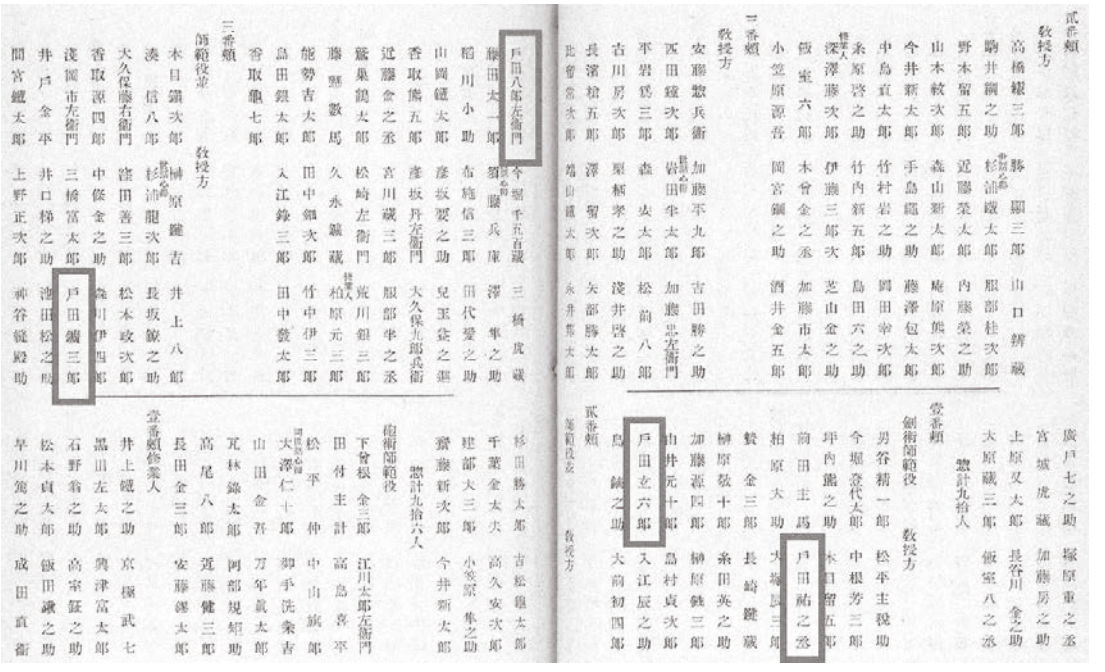
At the time, I thought this was odd. Why would a man who spends so much time breeding and training birds be skilled enough with the sword to earn a place as a sword instructor at the most elite of military academies in all of Japan?

According to Takamatsu, Toda Shinryuken Masamitsu was recruited by Matsudaira Noriyasu (松平乗全),[182] a member of the same clan as the Shogun, to help establish the *Kobusho* military academy in Edo and instruct swordsmanship. But, due to the turmoil caused by the arrival of Commodore Perry, the Shogunate's *Ansei Purge* and the ensuing political changes, he left the *Kobusho* in 1858 CE. After that the story goes that he stayed on the move and travelled the west-central regions of Japan, possibly as a monk, to lay low from all the troubles and wars he foresaw. He never took an official position again but eventually, before the turn of the century, he settled down in Kobe and later started training his grandson in the family martial arts at the Kuki family estate in Kobe.

'Hanko' or personal stamp registrar from the 1850's for Toda Hisajiro, apprentice to the chief falconer. Photo: 武蔵国橘樹郡神奈川宿本陣石井家文書

182 戦国忍法図鑑、初見 良昭、新人物往来社、1978、p.13

Matsudaira Noriyasu, Mikawa Lord who recruited Toda Sensei to the Kobusho.
Photo: 盛巌寺所蔵



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List of sword instructors published in 1860. Several Toda family members have been added to the list, but Hisajiro is no longer at the Kobusho.
Toda Hachirozaemon is still listed, making Hisajiro the ONLY Toda family member to have left the Kobusho.[183]

183　From 海舟全集　第七巻、勝安　芳、勝安芳、1929、p. 84

According to the *Kaishu Zenshu*, at the time of the founding of the *Kobusho*, other than the famous Toda Hachirozaemon (戸田八郎左衛門) who acted more along the lines of training program director, Hisajiro was the only Toda family member to be listed as a sword instructor.[184] But just a couple of years later he disappears from the lists while several other Toda family members joined the academy as instructors.[185] This scenario matches nicely, like a puzzle, with Takamatsu's story about his grandfather.

According to Takamatsu, Toda resigned from the *Kobusho* in late 1858 CE, at the time when Ii Naosuke became *tairo* or the chief elder to the Shogun and began his purge of the government of any officials that stood in the way of the shogunate's new trade policies.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, it is known from marriage and divorce records that Hisajiro's father, Toda Gosuke (戸田五介), was involved with the *oniwaban* spy and investigative network formed from the *ninja* families of Iga. Another interesting point is that both Gosuke and Hisajiro held the official positions of falconer to the Shogun. Interesting because falconry is known to be one of the major careers that *shinobi* and *onmitsu* in the service of the Tokugawa government would use to disguise themselves during their missions. Their falcons would often hunt and kill the carrier pigeons of rebellious and disloyal lords. Even during the Edo period, it was still common for *ninja* to go in and out of the residences of *takasho*.[186] Upon learning this, I really felt I needed to look at and consider Hisajiro, the apprentice to the chief falconer with connections to Matsumoto Castle, more closely.

Firstly, if Hisajiro is Shinryuken Masamitsu why did he change his name? Was he hiding from something? If so, would he have left us any clues to his identity?

Edo period map showing the location of the Kobusho Military Academy (circle) in relation to Suidobashi bridge (square).
Photo: 国立国会図書館デジタルコレクション

184 海舟全集　第七巻、勝安　芳、勝安芳、1929、p. 80
185 海舟全集　第七巻、勝安　芳、勝安芳、1929、p. 84
186 Shizuoka Prefecture Government website accessed April 7, 2019 https://www.visit-shizuoka.com/t/oogosho400/study/07_19.htm, 'このため鷹匠の住む屋敷には、忍者も出入りしていたという。'

Late 1800's photograph of Suidobashi. Buildings to the left are the perimeter buildings and gates to the Kobusho training grounds. Photo: 国立国会図書館デジタルコレクション

These were all questions that begged an answer. But first I needed to know, is this really him? Then a friend, Rowland Templar, asked me if there was anything special about the name Hisajiro, did I think it contained any clues? As soon as he asked me that, I saw the real reason why Hisajiro's name had jumped out of the pages at me. It was to do with the name Hisajiro itself. Looking at this name carefully we can see some clues. Just as people in the West like to name their children or grandchildren after other relatives in the family, the same is true but to an even higher artistic degree in Japanese samurai culture.

Hisajiro's name is written with the following characters:

久 (Hisa) **次** (ji) **郎** (rō)

Next, and important to know is, Takamatsu's birth name was (**壽嗣**) Hisa-tsugu. But, later in life he changed the first character Hisa, **壽**, to the modern and simplified style of **寿**. He also changed the reading from 'HISA-tsugu' into the alternative pronunciation 'TOSHI-tsugu'. But the meaning and content of the name remains exactly the same.

Both of the characters for 'Hisa' in Hisa-jiro and Hisa-tsugu mean something along the lines of 'a long time' or 'longevity'. The second character in 'Hisa-JI-ro' and the second character in 'Hisa-TSUGU' both have the meaning of 'next', or 'heir' or 'to inherit'.

Now for the confusing part…the character for 'Ji' in 'Hisa-JI-ro' is usually read as 'tsugu'. Therefore, Hisajiro's name can alternatively be read as Hisatsugu if the final character of **郎** (ro) is removed.

Simply stated, if you remove the last character of 郎 (ro) from Hisajiro and pronounce the second character with its alternative reading, you have Takamatsu's EXACT birth name with different characters while still maintaining the same meaning and content of the name. HISATSUGU.

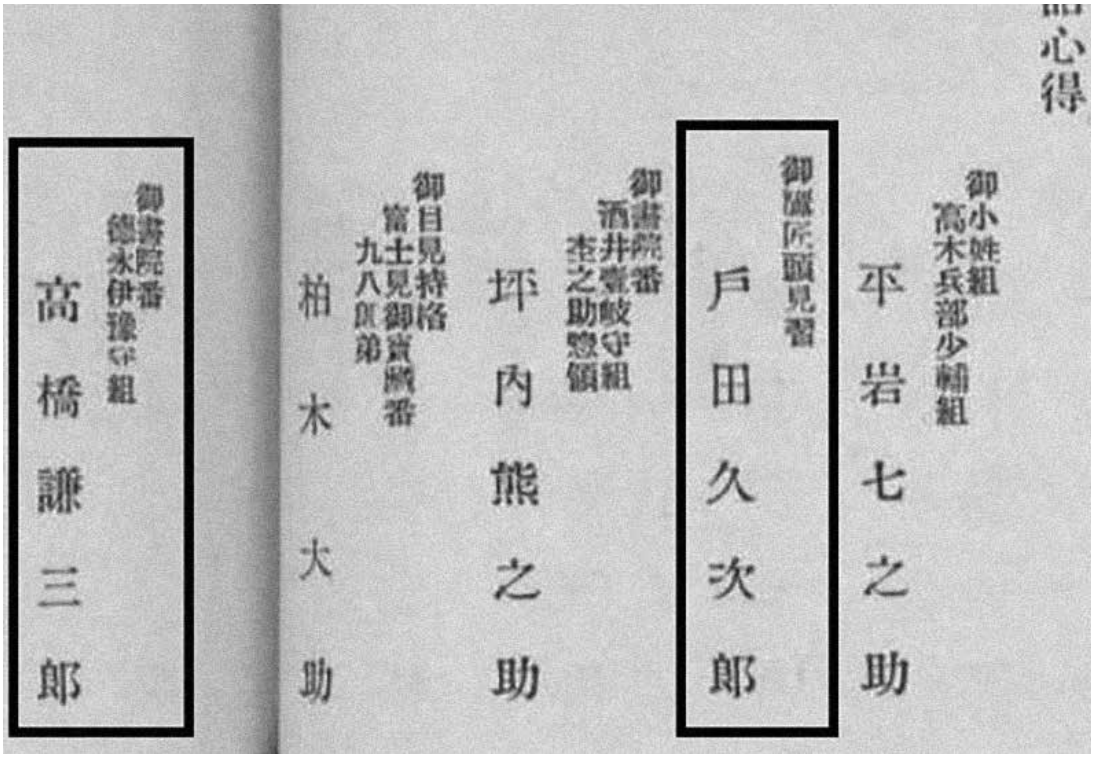
To me, this stretches the idea of coincidence. It appears that the name was chosen to represent that Takamatsu was to inherit or carry on the teachings of his grandfather. It was and still is very common for Japanese children to receive names based on variations of their ancestors, especially when they were people of power or position.

There is also significantly more circumstantial evidence that points to Hisajiro being the same person as Shinryuken Masamitsu. For example, as mentioned earlier, in Hatsumi Masaaki's book *Ninpo Taizen*, the author and 34th headmaster of the *Togakure Ryū* states that Toda Sensei struck up a relationship with the three famous and heroic Shogunate-retained samurai known as the *Bakumatsu no Sanshu* (幕末の三舟), starting with spear-master, Takahashi Deishu.[187] He also says, earlier in the same book, that according to the *Togakure Ryū* scrolls, the *Togakure Ryū* and *Iga Ryū ninja* infiltrated and corrupted the Shogun's *Shinchogumi* (新徴組) police force.[188]

Kondo Isami, 4th Generation headmaster of the Tennen Rishin Ryū who served as commander in both the Roshigumi and the Shinsengumi. Today the Tennen Rishin Ryū is headed up by Master Kato Kyoji in Tokyo. Photo: 国立国会図書館デジタルコレクション

187　忍法大全、初見良昭、講談社、2013、p. 163
188　忍法大全、初見良昭、講談社、2013、p. 42

The author (right) with Master Kato Kyoji, current headmaster of Tennen Rishin Ryū, discussing the Shinsengumi, ninjutsu and martial arts in 2018.



Page from the Kaishu Zenshu showing Takahashi Deishu (left box) and Toda Hisajiro (right box) working at the Kobusho at the same time and in the same 'Sewakokoroe' unit.[189]

189　海舟全集　第七巻、勝安　芳、勝安芳、1929、p. 84

In 1862 CE the supporters of the Shogunate and the supporters of the Emperor stood in opposition so the Tokugawa government levied master-less samurai known as *Rōshi* (浪士) in the Edo area, trained them as shogunate enforcers and sent them to Kyoto in 1863 CE. Takahashi Deishu and Kondo Isami were appointed as commanders in these new units called the *Roshigumi* (浪士組) and the *Shinchogumi* (新徴組),[190] the precursors to the famous *Shinsengumi* (新撰組) that policed the streets of Edo and Kyoto for the Shogun.

190 Japan 1853-1864: Genji Yume Monogatari、Baba Bunyel、Translated by Sir Ernest Mason Satow、内外出版協會、 1905、P. 79

Umanosuke Kashio (柏尾馬之助), on the right, lived from the late Tokugawa period to the Meiji and belonged to the Shinchogumi. He was a Hokushin Itto Ryū kenjutsu master and a master of Gekiken kendo. However, he later turned against the Shogun and became a revolutionary and supporter of the emperor

But soon Takahashi had to return to Edo because some of his members were traitors, cooperating with supporters of the Emperor and were caught.[191] Is it possible that these infiltrators of the *Shinchogumi* were spies working for the *Iga Ryū* and *Togakure Ryū*, and possibly used the relationship Toda Sensei struck up with Takahashi Deishu at the *Kobusho* to insert spies, with the ultimate goal of the Emperor gaining control of the country?

Takahashi Deishu in his younger years, during his command in the Shinchugumi.

Were these infiltrators of the *Shinchogumi* actually *ninja* that were loyal to the emperor and recruited by Toda during his time at the *Kobusho*? We may never know but Takamatsu's story about the man he claims to be his maternal grandfather and the actual life of Toda Hisajiro fit together like the pieces of a puzzle. The big question is why Toda Sensei would need to hide his name or change his identity. What could cause such major lifestyle-change for someone accustomed to living very comfortably under the benefits of serving the Shogun?

I still also had to wonder why a falconer, such as Toda Hisajiro, would be a master of the sword, especially *Gekiken* (撃剣), a style that relies less on form training and more on full contact sparring. *Gekiken* training and sparring includes leg sweeps, throws, joint locks, punches, kicks, chokes, etc. Basically, anything goes. So, I really wanted to know how a falconer who spent so much time walking the country, raising birds and hunting with the Shogun could be so skilled with the sword. This question begged an answer as, at that time, I had no idea of the role of falconry in the history of *ninjutsu*.

When trying to look closely at the possible reasons why Toda Sensei may have left his position at the *Kobusho*, we find that unfortunately the answer is not completely clear. Some possibilities are that Matsudaira Noriyasu, the Council of Elders member who was the benefactor of Shinryuken Masamitsu, lost his position in the council and was replaced by a man that was a political polar-opposite, Ii Naosuke. Therefore, Toda Sensei, possibly feeling that the way things were going would to lead to a civil war, resigned. He may have understood that the country was under a bigger threat, that of western powers destroying their way of life and replacing it with a 'modern' world.

The other often considered possibility is that he was sympathetic with the feelings and statements of his colleague at the *Kobusho*, *Kenjutsu* Master Matsudaira Tadatoshi Chikaranosuke (

191 大岡昇平全集、Volume 6、大岡昇平、中央公論社、1973、P. 25

松平忠敏主税助), who wrote that "*the Kobusho's purpose was to only improve individual's military technique, and that modern military training such as gunnery, requiring discipline on the group level, is not suitable for the samurai*".[192] He always maintained a negative view towards the training going on at the *Kobusho* and it is very possible that Toda Sensei felt the same way.

Gekiken style match. This was the early stages of modern Kendo but still much more dangerous, allowing strikes, throws and submissions. From: ***撃剣柔術指南、1897***

Hatsumi Sensei writes in his essay titled '泥水が清水に変わるとき' or '*When muddy water turns pure*' that the *Togakure Ryū* scrolls do not state the reason why Toda Sensei quit his position but he does have some ideas based on various stories passed on to him by Takamatsu. He says Toda probably foresaw the breakout of a Japanese civil war and that it made no sense for the Japanese to fight against each other. It may have been his way of showing that using the martial arts and sciences for dissension is a misuse and a great disgrace.

An interesting point that ties Hisajiro's branch of the Toda family with Matsumoto Castle in Nagano, near Mt. Togakushi is that in 1633 CE Matsudaira Naomasa (松平直政) became the *daimyo* lord of Matsumoto Castle. During his time there he commissioned a retainer of his to study at the Toda family falconry grounds to become a falconer under the tutelage of Toda Hisasuke Sadakichi (戸田久助貞吉)[193] a direct ancestor of Hisajiro. Hisasuke, a big and powerful man, had served the second Shogun Tokugawa Hidetada in Edo at the Toda family falconry grounds in *Sendagi* from April 1605 CE to July of 1623 CE.

When he died in 1652 CE he was recorded as making an annual salary equivalent to $1,500,000 USD while apparently living out the rest of his life at Matsumoto Castle.[194] That seems quite outlandish for a samurai falconer, unless he had other secret responsibilities that he was taking care of, such as preserving national security and running a spy network of *torimi* agents and *shinobi*.

One other point that stands out in my mind is that Toda Munemitsu, (Hisasuke's three times great grandfather, and Hisajiro's sixteen times great grandfather) is enshrined at the

192 『国史大辞典』「日本の武士は軽重共皆世禄仕官の君子、君子の身を以匹夫下部の姿に身をやつし、冠り物着類迄夷風に効らひ浅ましき形勢故、調練を心に快しと不仕」

193 松江藩松平直政時代の鷹書と鷹匠 — 宮内庁書陵部所蔵の鷹書・鷹詞の研究、三保サト子 & 三保忠夫、島根県立大学短期大学部松江キャンパス研究紀要Vol. 50 P. 33 (2012)

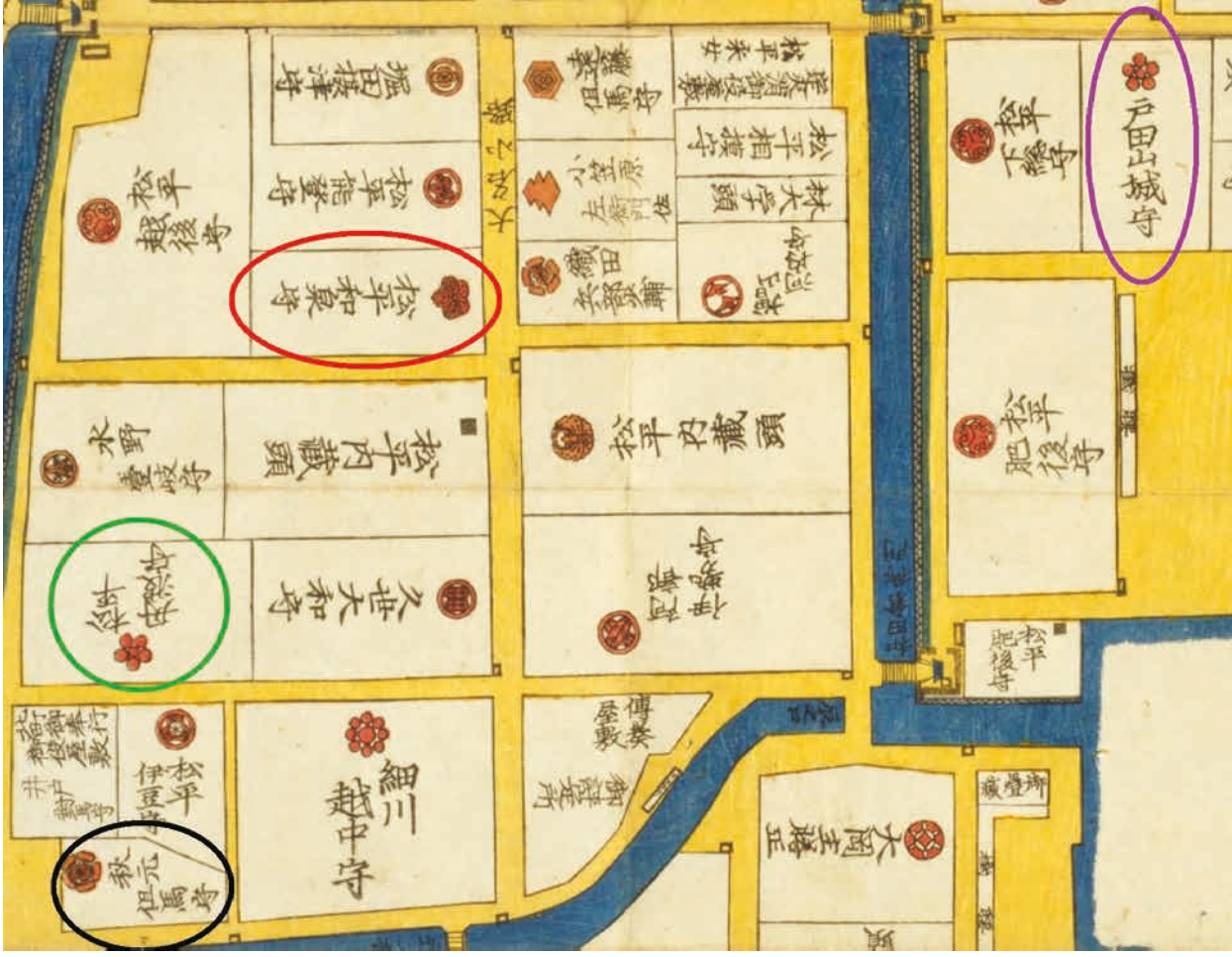
194 松江藩松平直政時代の鷹書と鷹匠 — 宮内庁書陵部所蔵の鷹書・鷹詞の研究、三保サト子 & 三保忠夫、島根県立大学短期大学部松江キャンパス研究紀要Vol. 50 P. 33 (2012), calculations based on １石＝７５，０００円

Matsumoto Shrine in Nagano as the revivor of the Toda clan. This seems somewhat odd as Toda Munemitsu was from Mikawa far to the southwest of Nagano. But, I personally strongly believe it's possible that the Toda family originated as the Tozawa (戸澤) clan in Shinano, near Togakushi Mountain. I think this because the Tozawa and the Toda clans, along with the Kuki clan, all share a common *kamon* or 'family crest' called the *Kuyō*. This Tozawa clan in Shinano held a mountain fortress there in the Warring States period that supported Ueda castle and the Sanada clan. It is my theory that they possibly fled to the Iga and the Mikawa regions after a loss in battle and survived under the name Toda.

A key point in Takamatsu's story about his grandfather is that he mentions Toda was appointed to the *Kobusho* by Matsudaira Noriyasu. Within the castle walls of Edo, in an area called *Nishi-Go-Maru* where the upper-class vassals and *daimyo* kept their residences, Noriyasu's home was literally right around the corner from Toda Mitsuhisa, the last lord of Matsumoto Castle and home to the Toda family's falconry and *ninjutsu* traditions.

Matsumoto Shrine, not far from Togakushi Mountain, where Toda Munemitsu is enshrined as the revivor of the Toda clan.[195]

195 Source: 663highland, ICC BY-SA 3.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)]



1850 map of Edo Castle Nishi-Go-Maru showing the location of the residences of Matsudaira Noriyasu (red), Toda Matsudaira Mitsuhisa (green), Toda Chudayu (purple) and Akimoto Yukitomo (black).[196]

As you can see by the map it would have been very easy for Noriyasu to request the Toda family for a highly skilled swordsman to fill the position. Living so close together it is undoubted that these two men would have known each other and even have had regular contact. The other Toda down the street, Chudayu, was also a descendant of the Toda Matsudaira family at Matsumoto Castle, later to serve as *karo* for the Mito Domain. He was a strong exponent of the *Sonnōron* (**尊王論**), a theory of absolute loyalty to the Emperor of Japan that implied that less loyalty should be given to the ruling Tokugawa shogunate.[197] Here we can see an early warning that the Toda family was getting ready to support the Emperor of Japan in the upcoming battles.

As I mentioned in earlier chapters, the Toda family of Matsumoto Castle is known for employing *ninja*. The type of *ninjutsu* that the Matsumoto domain specialized in was called *Injutsu* (**陰術**) or 'covert techniques'. Most castle documents point to the Akutagawa family from Koga as the specialists[198], but this also confirms that the Toda family did indeed have a historical relationship with *shinobi* and *Yojutsutsukai*.

196 Map from〔江戸切絵図〕. 御江戸大名小路絵図 嘉永２
197 明治の人物と文化、湯川松次郎、弘文社、1968、P. 21
198 図説・日本武道辞典、笹間良彦、柏書房、2003、P. 18

Toda Chudayu, from the same Toda family at Matsumoto Castle near Togakushi Mountain and strong exponent of absolute loyalty to the Emperor of Japan. Photo:『水藩人物肖像』

I find it likely that since the Toda family did not keep it a secret that they use *ninja*, they most reasonably would have had another set of *shinobi* that they were not open about, in a kind of medieval misdirection. The names of the upper level members who controlled the spies were most certainly kept as secret as possible as usually they are people in positions of power and honor. Too much was at stake to let it be found out that you employ, or even worse, were yourself a *ninja*.

In his youth, Toda Hisajiro's days would have been spent learning the family tradition of *Suwa Ryū* falconry and training in the usual martial arts for someone of samurai status. But is it possible that he he was also secretly training to be a *ninja*, just like his father had secretly done before him? To the rest of the world he was the chief falconer's apprentice, getting ready to follow in his father's footsteps and serve the Shogun as leader of the Zoshigaya, Sendagi and Ichigaya units.

Then one day, the United States Navy came to the shores of Japan and forcefully opened the isolated country up for trade, ending a Japanese policy lasting more than 250 years of forbidding anyone to leave or enter the country. The only punishment for this crime was death.[199] Unless of course you were working for the Shogun and had his permission. But even in that case it was still extremely rare for anyone to go in or out.

So, at this point I think we most likely get the idea as to why Hisajiro left the *Kobusho*, because things were not looking good and civil war was eminent. But why did he completely disappear and fade out of history?

I think I know why…

Toda Hisajiro may have tried to lay low for a very good reason. His father, Toda Gosuke Katsukyo (戸田五助勝強) also known as Toda Tanba no Kami (戸田肥後守),[200] planned and carried out an assassination attempt in 1868 CE on Katsu Kaishu, one of Hisajiro's old colleagues at the *Kobusho* that he befriended with Takahashi Deishu. By this time, he was a famous statesman who became the head of the Shogun's navy. At the time Toda Gosuke was an officer in the Shogun's army with war experience, fighting in the Battle of Fushimi (鳥羽伏見の戦い).[201] He was actively fighting off the Imperial army units coming towards the Shogunate capital, Edo, when Katsu Kaishu became a central figure in the parties within the Shogunate that were staying out of the conflict. Kaishu had been doing his best to keep the navy out of the battles and for this he became Gosuke's target for assassination.

But, through a very passionate discussion, Gosuke was talked out of it at the last moment by a man named Yamaguchi Kanichi (山口寛一). Gosuke and his men had Kaishu in their musket sights, ready to pull the triggers, when Yamaguchi stepped in. Convincing Gosuke that Katsu Kaishu's plans and vision for the future of Japan was best for the nation, Yamaguchi changed the course of history. There is a memorial stone plaque to memorialize the occasion called the *Toshuounohi* (東舟翁の碑).

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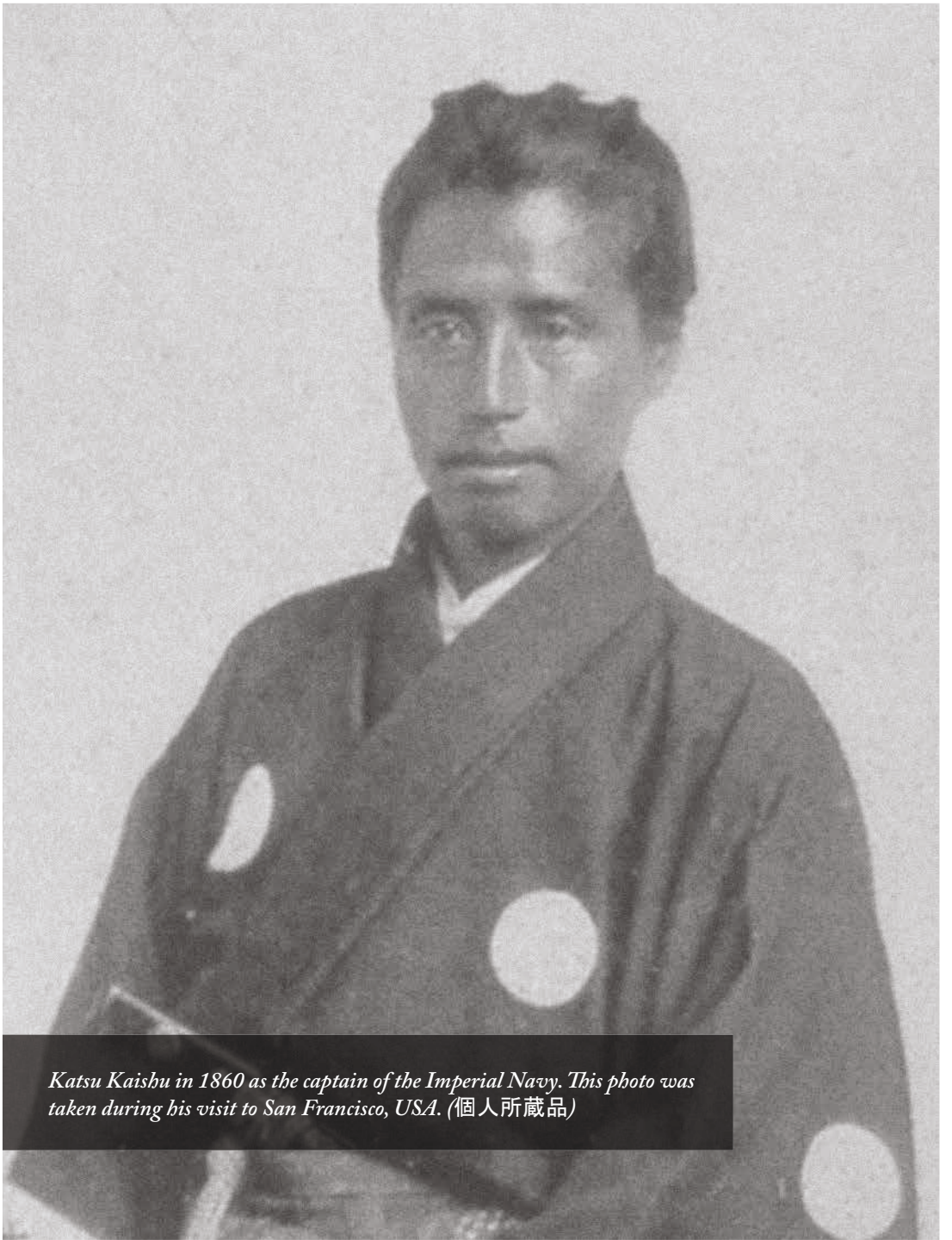
199 鎖国、Volume 14 of 日本 の 歴史、岩生成一、Edition 2、中央公論社、1971、P. 331
200 天皇の世紀、Volume 17、朝日新聞の文庫、大佛次郎、朝日新聞社、1977、P.58
201 勝海舟 『勝海舟全集14』陸軍歴史Ⅳ、講談社、1975年、192頁

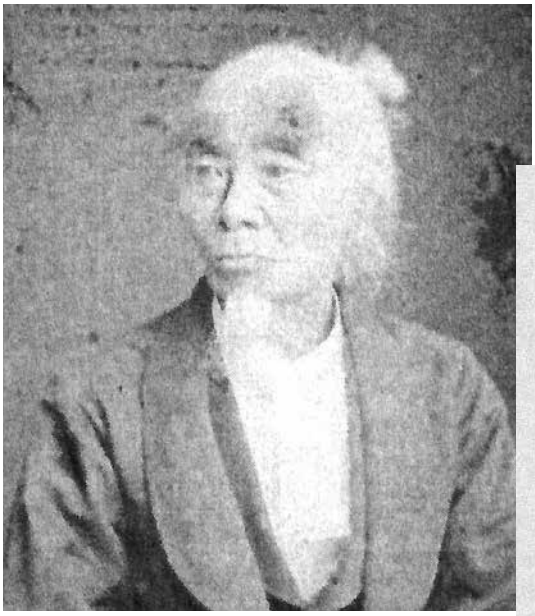
Had Yamaguchi not stopped the assassination of Katsu Kaishu Japanese history would have been extremely different. Kaishu became one of the three heroes of Japanese history that are now credited for the very little blood that was shed during the transition of power from the Shogun to the Emperor. This attempt alone would be very good reason to lay low, especially since Kaishu stayed alive and in power for quite some time. During the time just before and right after the change of power from the Shogun to the Emperor, assassinations, revenge killings and acts of terrorism had become rampant. That should be enough reason for anyone to change their name and hide.



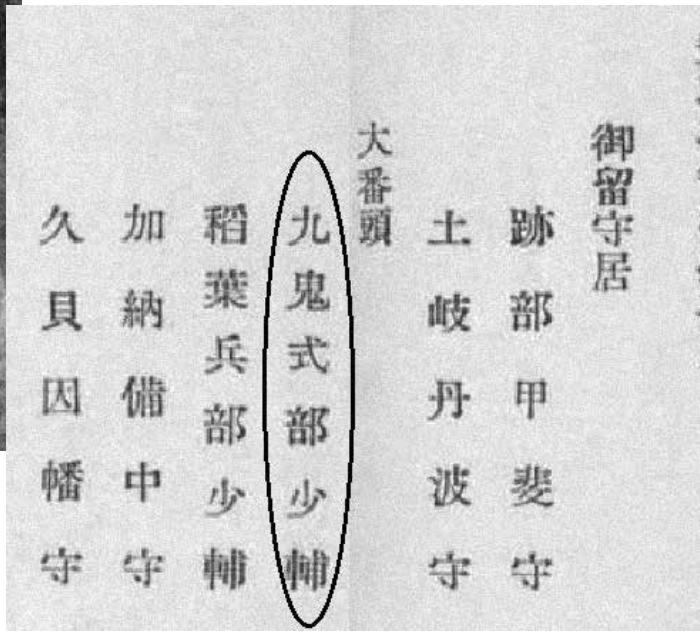
Katsu Kaishu in 1860 as the captain of the Imperial Navy. This photo was taken during his visit to San Francisco, USA. (個人所蔵品)

Memorial stone plaque to memorialize the stopping of Katsu Kaishu's assassination called the Toshuounohi (東舟翁の碑).

At the time of the few small battles for power during the Boshin Wars, the retired head of the Kuki clan and ex-president of the military science program at the *Kobusho*, Kuki Takahiro, along with his powerful sons, sided with the Emperor and his forces,[202] as did some of the branches of the Toda family. With this the Toda clan was ripped apart. Remaining underground supporters of the Shogun could potentially attempt revenge killings upon the family at any time, giving Hisajiro even more reason to hide his identity.



Kuki Takahiro, master of Kukishin Ryū and daimyo lord who headed up the Military Science program at the Kobusho.[203]



Kuki Takahiro, listed as an officer at the Kobusho with his official title, Shikibu-shō (式部少輔) 'Master of Ceremonial Affairs of the Imperial Court' in 1855.[204]

202 全国版幕末維新人物事典、歴史群像編集部、学研パブリッシング、2010、P. 166
203 Source: 三の丸尚蔵館収蔵品目録 写真　明治十二年 明治天皇御下命『人物写真帖』<上>　宮内庁三の丸尚蔵館所蔵
204 From 海舟全集　第七巻、勝安　芳、勝安芳、1929、p. 64

Kuki Takatomo, eldest son of Kuki Takahiro, married a daughter of Toda Mitsutsune, 8th Lord of Matsumoto Castle and from the same family as Toda Hisajiro.
Photo: 三の丸尚蔵館収蔵品目録 写真　明治十二年明治天皇御下命『人物写真帖』<上>　宮内庁三の丸尚蔵館所蔵

Something I found extremely interesting regarding the Kuki family during this time is that Kuki Takahiro's eldest son, Kuki Takatomo, married the daughter of Toda Mitsutsune. Toda Mitsutsune was the 8th Lord of Matsumoto Castle, the same place that Toda Hisajiro's lineage has served as falconers and Shogunate guards for generations. We knew the Toda family and the Kuki family had a long-standing relationship that goes back at least to the 1500's, possibly much earlier. But, here we see that relationship is still strong at the end of the Edo Period. Furthermore, as if this is not enough to say that Toda Hisajiro and Shinryuken Masamitsu must be the same person, even more clues pile up.

Kuki Takatomo's eldest son, Kuki Takaharu had a close relationship with Takamatsu. In fact, Takaharu organized the *Shobukyoku* (尚武局) martial arts department of a national *Shinto* faith organization and movement called the *Kōdōsenyōkai* (皇道宣揚会) and recruited Takamatsu as its headmaster of *Kukishin Ryū* martial arts training. As both Takaharu and Takamatsu had mothers that were Toda-Matsudaira family members connected to Matsumoto Castle, I believe there is a very likely chance that they are cousins.

Kuki Takaharu (left), eldest son of Kuki Takatomo. His mother was a Toda just like Takamatsu (right), she was the daughter of Toda Mitsutsune from Matsumoto Castle. I speculate that Takaharu and Takamatsu may have been cousins. Photos are photos of originals, author's collection.

Remember, it is said that the Toda-Matsudaira family of the Shinshu-Matsumoto domain excelled in four arts. The arts of the spear, gunnery, medicine and In-jutsu (another name for *ninjutsu*). When Toda Mitsutsune's daughter married Kuki Takatomo and went to the Kobe region to settle with him, did Toda Hisajiro go with her and serve the Kuki family there? Is that how his daughter met Takamatsu's father? We may never know; the mystery continues to persist.

So to Hisajiro's death and final resting place. At the time of writing I cannot find any historical information regarding what Hisajiro did after leaving his positions as falconer and instructor at the *Kobusho*. We have no information on a date of death or grave location. This is very mysterious for a man who held such a high position under the Shogun and was an original instructor of swordsmanship at the *Kobusho*.

A grave for this man should be very easy to find but it's not. This again matches very well with why we have no grave location for Toda Shinryuken Masamitsu.

So, in summary of this topic of is Hisajiro Shinryuken, in 2018 I proposed the idea to my martial arts teacher and *Togakure Ryū* 34th headmaster, Masaaki Hatsumi Sensei, that Toda Shinryuken Masamitsu could very well be Toda Hisajiro Masamitsu. I told him I thought the reason no one could find Shinryuken Masamitsu in the historical records was because Toda Hisajiro was his true name and that Shinryuken Masamitsu could have been an alias that he used when teaching for the Kuki family in Kobe at the end of the 1800s. The name Masamitsu (正光) strongly hints that he was trying to point towards the Toda-Matsudaira family that ruled at Matsumoto as all the lords had the character for *Mitsu* (光) in their first name. There are many branches of the Toda family but only the branch at Matsumoto Castle use this character generationally.

Headmaster Hatsumi's response was one of calm surprise. He said (in Japanese) '*As expected, if someone went about this research the way you did, the truth would come out.*' He said he was aware that Takamatsu changed the names of people and possibly even the names of some of the *Ryū* that he inherited. He then thanked me for bringing this information to him and painted a picture for me as a gift in return.

Out of respect for his master Takamatsu, he never pursued this line of research. Takamatsu had felt that there was still a need to keep his grandfather's identity a secret during the 1900s and Hatsumi Sensei honored that. He stated that he knew some things about Toda Sensei and his identity but to this day he has still not shared those secrets with anyone.

Fortunately, since so much time has passed now, Hatsumi Sōke asked that I immediately share this information with everyone who was interested.

Hatsumi Sensei's Togakure Ryū Ninpo Museum in Nagano

FBI

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